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MIRACLE IN HISTORY
AND IN MODERN THOUGHT

MIRACLE IN HISTORY AND IN MODERN THOUGHT

or

MIRACLE AND CHRISTIAN APOLOGETIC

by

C. J. WRIGHT, B. D.

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TO

MY WIFE

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"The human mind will continually be forced to renew its attempts to grasp and retain in scientific form the truth which it has believingly appropriated, in order that it may maintain this truth against unbelieving civilisation, and that it may satisfy its own cravings after unity and clearness of philosophic view." (Lotze, *Microcosmus*, Vol. II, p. 481.)

PREFACE

The main purpose of a preface in a book of this character should be, I imagine, to seek in a few sentences to prepare the reader for the general point of view which has inspired the author in his task. Permit me, then, to say that the words of Lotze which are found on the previous page express my central attitude better than any other words I know, or can at this moment find. An understanding perusal of them will reveal that my motive has been a two-fold one:

First, an endeavour to defend the truths inherent in the concept of the supernatural. In the stress and tension of our theological 'civil wars' it is unfortunately easy to forget our main antagonist, represented by a finally-materialistic view of life and of the universe. I have sought, with what success the reader must judge, to be faithful to an emphasis which refuses to forget this fact.

Second, (as indeed issuing therefrom or as inextricably conjoined thereto) an endeavour to establish the inacceptability of the miracle concept as propounded and defended in the main body of apologetic endeavour of the past centuries. A critical investigation, leading where necessary to a frank repudiation, of this traditional type of apologetic is, in my own judgment, a necessary prelude to that effective and comprehensive restatement of Christian apologetic which is one of the first and most urgent necessities of religious thought for today and tomorrow.

By my sub-title I seek to indicate at one and the same time my critical interest in past apologetic, and the apologetic orientation of my own mind. I do not apologise for apologetics, for the simple reason that it will always be necessary for those who think.

Further, I have been unable to divorce a study of miracle from the study of miracles. In other words, I cannot discuss the question *in vacuo*. In these days of critical historical research the expedient may commend itself to some minds that it would be well to confine one's attention to *a priori* considerations. In an age which is essentially scientific, or inductive, this facile expedient will be, I believe, of no abiding service to religion. If our apologetic involves positions at variance with the *consensus* of competent judgment on historical issues it is obvious that we are, in the end, not merely discrediting our apologetic but, which is much worse, are bringing discredit upon that which our apologetic was constructed to sustain or to proclaim. A Faith which is to endure is a *Faith that accepts* all that the universe has had, has, and shall have for our teaching. Historical science, therefore, cannot be overlooked in any discussion of our theme.

If I were to give adequate expression here to my indebtedness to others I should not know where to begin, nor where to end. We are all of us "debters both to Greeks and to barbarians, to the wise and to the foolish." What have we that we have not received? My indebtedness, may I be allowed *ex animo* to declare, is not least to those from whom I differ most. I wish, however, to make specific most grateful acknowledgment here of the unfailing courtesy of the officials of the British Museum reading room.

C. J. WRIGHT

PENZANCE
JULY, 1929

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MIRACLE IN HISTORY
AND IN MODERN THOUGHT

CHAPTER I

MIRACLE — THE QUESTION TODAY

Among the many questions which are occupying at the present day the world of theological and philosophico-religious thought, the most important, because the most central, is that of the miraculous, or, to give the question the term of more comprehensive reference, the supernatural. To this point converge such centrally important yet seemingly widely divergent questions as the "inspiration" of our sacred Scriptures and the "revelation" contained therein, the historical origins of Christianity, the doctrine of the Person of Christ, the rationale and value of Tradition, the Church, its authority and functions, and the whole intricate question of Providence in the history of events and of the Spirit of God in the developing thought of the world. Here at the miraculous the manifold discussions on these high themes meet, here at this central issue the conflicting apologetics of Christianity will in the end have to envisage, and if possible readjust, their divergencies; and here from, we fear, the resulting conflict will issue Christianity's apologetic for the coming ages.

Much has been written in recent years on this question. Much, it is safe to say, will have yet to be written. At the present time the issues are not yet clearly envisaged, and considerable confusion attends most of the discussions on this all-important theme. Writers find it a task of very considerable difficulty to express their views in such a way as to avoid ambiguity, and not infrequently they are quoted in support of a position directly opposed to the one they seek to maintain. The desire to elucidate the question and to unravel some of its confused and confusing strands has, let us say at once, been one of our dominant *motifs* in venturing upon this discussion. The fact that we are vividly conscious of these confusions and ambiguities may be set forth as an apologia for our temerity in undertaking the considerable risk of adding thereto.

It is important, first of all, to note the very obvious tendency in thought-circles in regard to "miracles." The direction in which the stream is flowing, and with increasing rapidity and force, is patent to everyone in any degree conversant with the history of Christian apologetics through the centuries. The tendency may be expressed in different ways but comes fundamentally to this — an increasing reluctance to maintain either the historicity of specific "miracles" or their essentiality to the truth of the Christian message. Let us examine these two points separately.

1. *First*, the increasing reluctance to maintain the historicity of specific "miracles."

From the early centuries of the Church until the last generation or two the generally accepted position has been that all the "miracles" of Scripture happened exactly as recorded. This has been the view not simply of what we may term the "dogmatic" type of mind, but of the mind given to philosophic scrutiny and investigation. Thinkers as diverse as Augustine, Origen, Aquinas, Pascal, Locke, Berkeley, Butler, and Paley accepted the "miracles" of Scripture without question as historical. Varied as were their modes of arguing for the miraculous they were yet in agreement here — the "miracles" of Scripture happened. Doubtless they would all have held that the historicity of these "miracles" was essential to the truth latent in the miraculous idea: but we, who do not regard this as an essential bond, are at liberty to draw the distinction between their varying defences of the miraculous and their unanimous acceptance of the historicity of "miracles."

This practical unanimity was by no means broken by that divisive movement in Christian life and thought known as the Reformation. Roman Catholic and Protestant apologetic alike accepted as fact all the "miracles" of Scripture, though here and there lonely thinkers, such as Woolston in England and Paulus in Germany, ventured to deny that these "miracles" were to be regarded as historical, claiming sometimes that they were to be regarded as allegories. In this, these were inheritors of the allegorical tendency always latent in Christian thought, but they did what earlier allegorists had not explicitly done — they denied that the miracles were *events*. Suffice it, however, to say that Roman and Protestant writers alike for the most part accepted the "miracles" of Scripture as historical.

How vastly changed is the present situation is familiar to every student of the subject. The historical, as contrasted with the dogmatic, approach to the Scriptures, — heralded, it is true, by lonely thinkers like Spinoza, whose *Tractatus* has been regarded as "the first document in the modern science of biblical criticism,"[1] — has only come to be generally welcomed in this country within the last generation or so. But since the widespread acceptance of its method, radical changes have come in regard to the maintenance of the historicity of the "miracles" of Scripture. First, many of the "miracles" of the Old Testament came to be questioned from the point of view of historical fact. This precedence in questioning the Old Testament "miracles" was natural, in that historical research felt itself freer in dealing with the Old Testament than with the New Testament. The historical investigation of the New Testament, however, inevitably followed, and brought with it much and increasing question as to the precise historical basis of the "miracles" there recorded. Less and less easy is it to find scholarly writers who will explicitly claim the historicity of specific "miracles" even in the New Testament. Preachers who base discussions upon these more and more shirk the historical issues and concentrate on the spiritual truths adumbrated. This attitude is almost imposed upon them by the temper of question which is gradually and increasingly filtering down into the general consciousness of the reading section of their congregations, a temper which in regard to "miracles" has implicit within it what a French Roman Catholic conservative apologist has termed "*une gêne, une hésitation, une incertitude, un pourquoi, un peut-être.*"[2]

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[1] Professor Pringle-Pattison, in *Ency. Britt.* XIth ed. Vol. 25, p. 690. The *Tractatus* was first published in 1670. A. W. Benn also in *The History of English Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century* (1906), Vol. I, p. 101, called Spinoza "the father of modern biblical criticism." This honour, however, has been claimed for many. The Notes on the New Testament of Lorenzo Valla, the Italian humanist (c. 1406–1457), have been claimed as "the earliest work of modern biblical criticism." (C. Beard in his Hibbert Lectures on the Reformation, pp. 39–40.)

To trace in detail the growth of this questioning and rejective attitude towards "miracles" during the last two generations in England would be an interesting task, but one beyond the scope and purpose of this work. A few salient illustrations, however, may be given to sketch a bare outline. The one-time famous *Essays and Reviews*, first published in 1860, marked a distinct stage in English thought on the question — especially the challenging essays of Jowett and Baden Powell. This volume, widely assailed at the time as "a concerted attack upon Revealed Religion,"[3] may be regarded as the expression of the growing tendency of thought at Oxford in those years to bring critico-historical principles to the examination of the Sacred Scriptures. This tendency was from the rationalistic and anti-religious point of view expressed by the late Lord Morley when he thus described the Oxford of his day (c. 1850–60): "The force of miracle and myth and intervening Will in the interpretation of the world began to give way before the reign of law."[4] The popularity of such a novel as Mrs. Humphry Ward's *Robert Elsmere*, first published in 1888, showed how the questioning attitude to "miracles" was laying hold on the non-professional theological mind. The work upon the Gospels of Germans like Paulus[5] (never yet translated into English), Strauss, Baur, Keim, and many others, came to be generally familiar among biblical students, and while numerous able replies to the advanced yet conflicting positions taken by these appeared, there remained this ineradicable mental disposition from the perusal of such works — the "miracles" of the Gospel are not to be securely relied upon. Already in 1881 a situation had arisen which Dr.

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[2] Mgr. Mignot, Archbishop of Albi, in *Revue du Clergé Français*, Nov. 15, 1900, p. 574. (Art., *L'apologétique Contemporaine.*)

[3] See Liddon's *Life of Pusey* (4 vols., 1893–97), Vol. IV, Chaps. 2 and 3, for the hostility manifested to this volume.

[4] *Recollections*, Vol. I, p. 13.

[5] His *Commentary on the New Testament* was published 1800–04, his *Life of Jesus* in 1828.

George Salmon, who at the time repudiated firmly a "non-miraculous Christianity," had thus described: "Nowadays instead of regarding the miraculous part of Christianity as the foundation on which the remaining part rests, this miraculous part is looked upon by many as the overburdening weight under which, if it cannot be cleared away, the whole fabric must sink."[6] Those who argued most courageously against the position taken in the works which assailed the precise historicity of the Gospels, yet perforce made concessions here and there, concessions indeed not to any "advanced" thinker, but to a spirit, a temper, an attitude — to nothing less indeed than that scientific instinct for exactitude which was asserting itself everywhere and would not be denied. Some of them indeed lived to modify their own opposition to anti-miracle critiques of the Gospel. Names such as A. B. Bruce of Glasgow, George Salmon of Dublin, and the recently departed W. Sanday of Oxford occur at once to the mind as British scholars who began their careers with a sincere apologetic for the historicity of Gospel "miracles" and ended it, in varying degrees, with as sincere a refusal to abide by their earlier views. Others like Dr. E. A. Abbott maintained throughout their lives a consistently critical attitude towards "miracles," and found in their later years a more understanding and sympathetic reception of their views than was possible when first they promulgated them. As long ago as 1886 Dr. Abbott indulged in a prophetic analysis of the situation: "Belief in miracles now rests on an inclined plane; friction is daily lessening, the downward motion is rapidly increasing."[7] The history of theological thought during the last forty years has certainly tended to substantiate such a prophecy.

In other countries the growth of the same questioning attitude may be traced. In the case of Germany, indeed, its growth has been more rapid than here. This has been due to the adoption in Germany of critical principles in approaching the Gospels which were only generally welcomed in this country later. The tardiness with which welcome was accorded in England to the historical and literary criticism of the Gospels was commented on by

[6] In *Non-miraculous Christianity.*

[7] *The Kernel and the Husk* (1886), p. 347.

Mark Pattison as long ago as 1860. He wrote, in "Tendencies of Religious Thought in England" in the volume already referred to, *Essays and Reviews:* "That investigation . . . has scarcely yet obtained a footing in the English Church."[8] The story of the numerous German endeavours during the last century or so to recover "the historical Jesus," in other words to ascertain the precise historical value of the Gospel narratives of His life and work, has been brilliantly sketched by Schweitzer in his *Quest of the Historical Jesus.* An essential idea in practically all these endeavours was that the "miracle stories" of the Gospels cannot be relied upon as exact history. While various hypotheses were suggested to explain the form of these stories as we have them in the Gospels — from the so-called "rationalistic" views of Paulus to the historico-philosophic views of Keim — the main fact that emerges for our study is that all of these hypotheses postulate a large amount of inhistoricity in the narratives. To many of these writers the miracle stories of the Gospels are due to what Pfleiderer called "a progressive idealizing and allegorizing of historical reminiscences."[9] To show the present position of German thought to the question, it will suffice to quote the words of a discerning student. Professor Weinel of Jena told us more than twenty years ago that in his country Christian thinkers had "seriously embraced the conviction that the notion of miracles cannot be introduced any more into science nor into history."[10] Another, Professor Bousset of Göttingen, has said: "There is still one thing that no longer fits in with this new world — a miracle, in the strict sense of the word, in the sense of the intervention of God in this natural order of things by setting aside its laws."[11] These utterances on the larger question of miracle in its deeper meaning have sprung in part from the widespread agreement in Germany on the smaller historical question — the fairly general rejection on critical grounds of the precise historicity of the "miracles" of the Gospels. Within the last year or two the late Professor Troeltsch, stressing the importance of historico-critical methods, said that the old miracle apologetic had "been rendered untenable, not by theories, but by documents, by discoveries, by the results of exploration. The force of such evidence cannot be resisted by anyone whose sense of truth has been educated by philology, or even by anyone possessing an average amount of ordinary 'common sense.'"[12]

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[8] Ninth ed., 1861, p. 262.

[9] See *Primitive Christianity* (Eng. ed., 4 vols., 1906–11), Vol. II, p. 19.

[10] H. Weinel in *Hibbert Journal*, July, 1909, p. 730.

[11] *What Is Religion?* p. 284.

In the case of France, the situation is in many respects similar, the difference being due to the fact that the dominant Christianity there is Roman Catholic. The scientific mind of France, which, unfortunately and yet not altogether surprisingly, has been in large measure out of all sympathetic touch with the Christianity embodied before it, has for more than a hundred years rejected "miracle" in general without specific study of the Gospel "miracles" in particular. The era of the Encyclopaedia and of Voltaire and Rousseau gave the lead to nineteenth-century France. A writer like Renan gave, it is true, specific consideration to the "miracles" of the New Testament, but this, in his case at least, was because an early ecclesiastical training had turned his mind specifically in that direction. The majority of French scientific thinkers regarded the question of "miracles" as *une chose jugée* long before the critical examination of the scriptural records became an essential study for biblical students. The rise of this study has, in France, as in other countries, had the effect of spreading this critical attitude towards "miracles" from the extra-ecclesiastical scientific world to the Christian leaders of thought, both Catholic and Protestant. The "modernist" movement in the Church of Rome had,[13] as one of its chief leaders, an historical student of Christian origins like Loisy, who regarded the "miracle" stories of the Gospels as "a kind of idealization" of Christ's acts. Their present form as we have them in the Gospels is not their "primitive form." They are the work of "tradition," which, following its natural tendency, saw in the ministry of Jesus "characteristic features and indubitable proofs of His Messianic dignity." Hence they came to be regarded by the compilers of our Gospels as "acts of Divine Omnipotence, beyond all comparison with those that God might permit a pious man to do for the succour of his equals." [14] The Protestant section of the Church in France has also its historical investigation into Gospel origins, whose work tends in a similar direction. As far back as the middle of the nineteenth century Scherer dealt in a critical spirit with the narrated facts of the Gospels, calling attention to what he called "the Errata of the New Testament." [15] Since then, historico-critical principles have been increasingly adopted.[16]

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[12] *Christian Thought — Its History and Application*, 1923, p. 15. A valuable sketch of this historico-critical movement in Germany during the nineteenth century is found in Pfleiderer's *The Development of Theology in Germany since Kant*, Book III, Chap. 1.

[13] Loisy is, of course, no longer in communion with the Church.

In other countries the same tendency is to be noted. At the beginning of this century Professor Wernle of Basel, in telling the story of *The Beginnings of Christianity*, attributed the miracle stories of the New Testament on the one hand to the naïve prescientific view of Nature common at the time among all peoples, and on the other to "the entire absence of the critical faculty." [17] About a decade later Professor Wendland, also of Basel, in his able defense of the miracle idea in *Miracles and Christianity*, when speaking of the "nature miracles" of the Gospels, put his refusal to accept their historicity in this somewhat guarded, and indeed enigmatic, way: "In themselves . . . even miracles of this kind are possible for Divine omnipotence. But the rest of our religious and historical experience shows that it is not in this way God is wont to deal with us." [18]

In America, likewise, though the forces opposed to the tendency are more considerable than in the countries already named, the growing reluctance to maintain the historicity of "miracles" is to be noted. The late Prof. G. B. Foster of Chicago, speaking of biblical "miracles," went so far as to say that "an intelligent man who now (*i.e.*, in 1906) affirms his faith in such stories as actual facts can hardly know what *intellectual* honesty means." [19]

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[14] See *L'Évangile et L'Église*, Eng. ed., 1903, p. 38. See also Loisy's *Les Évangiles Synoptiques* (Ceffonds, 1907–08).

[15] See J. R. Beard's *Progress of Religious Thought in the Protestant Church of France*, 1861, pp. 248–297, also pp. 317–342.

[16] See, for example, recent volumes such as *L'Évangile de Marc et ses rapports avec ceux de Matthieu et de Luc*, Maurice Goguel, Paris, 1909, *Jésus Historique*, Chas. Piepenbring (2d ed., Strasbourg, Paris, 1922) (Eng. tr., *The Historical Jesus*, New York, 1924).

[17] *The Beginnings of Christianity*, Paul Wernle (Eng. tr., 1903, 2 vols.), Vol. I, pp. 2–5.

[18] *Miracles and Christianity* (Eng. tr., 1911), pp. 227–228.

2. *The second feature* of the present-day tendency we have specified is an increasing reluctance to regard "miracle" as essential to the Christian Truth and Message. This reluctance of course arises inevitably from the prevalent undermining of their historicity, but, in consequence of its importance, needs to be considered separately.

It is impossible to trace here the historical growth of the "evidential" theory of miracle. Suffice it to say that from the earliest times these events called "miracles" were regarded as a kind of proof or verification of the truths of the Christian religion. Incipient "modernism" can doubtless be found in the early Church and in mediaeval times,[20] but this is overweighted and rendered nugatory by what we may regard as the traditional concept of miracle. Pascal sought to combine and reconcile traditional with what we may term "modernist" views when he said: "The truth of a doctrine is to be judged of by the miracles wrought to support it: the reality of miracles is to be judged of by the doctrine," [21] — an attempted combination and reconciliation which has been the customary miracle apologetic since his day. Howbeit, the "evidential" notion of miracle persisted in full vitality until comparatively recent times. In England it could draw support from the one-time widely influential philosophy of Locke, which support doubtless assisted its survival. In the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (first published in 1690) he said, of miracles: "Where such supernatural events are suitable to ends aimed at by Him Who has the power to change the course of nature, there, *under such circumstances*, that may be the fitter to procure belief, by how much the more they are beyond or contrary to ordinary observation. This is the proper case of *miracles*, which, well attested, do not only credit themselves but give it also to other truths, which need such confirmation." [22] The influence of Butler's historic work, *The*

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[19] *The Finality of the Christian Religion*, p. 132.

[20] Cf. *Hibbert Journal*, October, 1918. *Miracles and the Mediaeval Mind*, by G. G. Coulton.

[21] *Pensées sur les Miracles*.

[22] Oxford 1894 ed., 2 vols. Vol. II, p. 382.

Analogy (published in 1736), also did much to retard the decay of the evidential view of miracle. To Butler, as to many lesser thinkers, miracles and prophecy were still the "direct and fundamental proofs" of Christianity.[23] A measure of the persistence in England of such evidential views of miracle may be found in the fact that Paley's *Evidences* has only recently been taken off the list of prescribed textbooks for Cambridge University examinations — and that in spite of periodic protests both mild and vehement.[24]

Miracles, being thus regarded through Christian history as "evidences" of the truths of Christianity, were held to be essentially one with those truths. Christianity stood or fell with them. Even to within a generation ago this position was confidently maintained by Protestant and Catholic apologetic alike, the only difference between the two types of miracle apology being that whereas the former regarded Christianity as born of miracle the latter in addition to this declared that miracle "conserves and propagates Christianity." Extensive citations to substantiate these contentions are not necessary. It may suffice to give but one or two. "With the truth of miracles the entire citadel of Christianity stands or falls." "The negation of miracles leads to the annihilation not merely of the Christian faith, but of all religion." [25] Thus declared one of the ablest German Protestant defenders of evidential miracle apologetic of a past generation. Another in similar vein declared: "The same grave in which modern heathenism buries the miraculous, swallows up everything which gives to human existence an ideal character, a true value: the soul made in the Divine image, faith and prayer, the holy person of the Redeemer, the entire system of Christian truth, the future world, the living God!" [26] One or two English apologists whose essential position tended to similar conclusions may also be cited. Mansel maintained that, if the reality of miracles as facts is denied "all Christianity . . . so far as it has any title to that name, so far as it has any special relation to the Person or the teaching of Christ, is overthrown at the same time"; and went on to declare that "a teacher who proclaims himself to be specially sent by God, and whose teaching is to be received on the authority of that mission, must, from the very nature of the case, establish his claim by proofs of another kind than those which merely evince his human wisdom or goodness."[27] Likewise one of the ablest Bampton lecturers, Mozley, maintained that "miracles are the necessary complement" of the truths of Christianity, "which, without them, are purposeless and abortive, the unfinished fragments of a design which is nothing unless it is the whole." He then went on to declare with precision: "Miracles and the supernatural contents of Christianity must stand or fall together. These two questions — the *nature* of the revelation and the *evidence* of the revelation — cannot be disjoined."[28] Trench, who defended the evidential value of miracles in a much more guarded way than the above, yet maintained that, "in the array of proofs for the certainty of the things which we have believed," miracles have "a most important place." While freely and fully acknowledging that the fact "that the kingdom of lies has its wonders no less than the kingdom of truth, would be alone sufficient to convince us that miracles cannot be appealed to absolutely and simply in proof of the doctrine which the worker of them proclaims," he went on to declare that, without the Gospel miracles, the idea of a Redeemer would be "infinitely weakened and impoverished."[29] Roman Catholic apologetic likewise declared: "*La preuve par excellence de la divinité du christianisme, c'est le miracle; né du miracle, le miracle le conserve et le propage; son histoire, n'est pour ainsi dire, qu'une suite uninterrompue, d'éclatants prodiges.*"[30] And again: "*Le miracle est le véritable pivot de la religion chrétienne.*"[31] "Miracles are so interwoven with our religion, so connected with its origin, its promulgation, its progress and whole history, that it is impossible to separate them from it."[32] A recent Roman Catholic apologist for miracle in the traditional sense may also be cited. Hilarin Felder regards miracles as the "bulwark" of Christianity, and as "so important and essential to Christianity." He further goes on to declare that the giving of them up is dictated by a "naturalistic view of the universe."[33]

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[23] *Analogy*, Part II, Chap. 7.

[24] A *mild* protest was that of Dr. Headlam, who regarded its retention as a textbook as "unfortunate" (*Miracles of the New Testament*, p. 45). A *vehement* protest was that of the late Dr. Adeney, who regarded its retention as "a soul-destroying futility." (Cf. *Hibbert Journal*, article October, 1920.)

[25] Christlieb, *Modern Doubt and Christian Belief*, p. 286.

[26] Beyschlag, quoted by Christlieb, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

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[27] In *Aids to Faith*, 1861, p. 3 and p. 35 respectively. (Mansel's Essay is "On miracles as evidences of Christianity.")

[28] *On Miracles* (3d ed., 1872, p. 11 and p. 18 respectively).

[29] *Notes on the Miracles* (6th ed., 1858). See pp. 23–24 and pp. 93–94.

[30] Abbé Gondal in *Le Miracle*, Paris, 1894, p. 193.

[31] *Le Miracle*, p. 195.

A measure of the changed orientation of thought to the question is found in the fact that few competent thinkers can be found writing today in such extreme terms.

Side by side, however, with this emphasis on the essentiality of miracles to the Christian religion, there has grown up, especially during the last fifty years, an increasing repudiation of the type of apologetic it manifested. Here again the movement away from the *evidential* notion of the miraculous has been much slower and more measured in England than in Germany. This doubtless is accounted for by the differences in national mentality, the speculative bent of the German mind instinctively repudiating an apologetic which made belief in recorded events in time as essential to the undying truth of religion, the more matter-of-fact English mind finding less irksomeness in such a notion. The great German Idealistic movement in philosophy at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries was a prime factor in that development.[34] From the influence of that movement in large measure has sprung the increasing repudiation of the evidential theory of the miraculous.

In 1784 Herder published his *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*.[35] The significance of this epochal work for our subject is found in the section on the "Origin of Christianity, with the Fundamental Principles It Included." Here he set forth seven features which "contributed to the structure of Christianity."[36] *Miracles have no place in this list.* In 1792 Fichte as a young man wrote his *Kritik aller Offenbarung*, which had as its central principle "that no proof of the divinity of a Revelation can be derived from an appeal to Miracles occurring in connection with it, but that the question of its authenticity can be decided only by an examination of its contents." This first literary production of Fichte was at first attributed to Kant and was published in spite of the considerable opposition of the Dean of the Theological Faculty at Halle.[37] It marked a distinct stage in the movement away from the evidential theory of the miraculous. In 1793 Kant published, in spite of considerable opposition from the Government of his day, his *Religion within the Bounds of Reason Only*. This work called forth the severe displeasure of the king, Frederick William II, who exacted a pledge from Kant not to write or lecture on matters religious for the future. In this treatise Kant maintained that miracle was not necessary to religion. "Moral religion," he said, "tends to displace and dispense with all miraculous beliefs whatever; for mankind betrays a culpable state of moral unbelief, when he refuses to acknowledge the paramount authority of those behests of duty primordially insculpted on his heart, unless he sees them accredited and enforced by miracles." [38] Under the impulse of such teaching the movement away from all miracle apologetic in Germany became, as the nineteenth century progressed, widespread and in the end irresistible. Hegel, in his lectures on the *Philosophy of History*, declared, in accord with the whole spirit of his philosophy, that "the real attestation of the Divinity of Christ is the witness of one's own Spirit — not Miracles."[39] In his lectures also on the *Philosophy of Religion* he noted that the *Aufklärung* had "gained the mastery" over formal miracle faith, and declared that "if orthodoxy demand faith of this kind, it becomes impossible for it, in presence of certain ways of looking at things, common among men, to maintain it."[40] In 1799 Schleiermacher as a young man of thirty-one published his widely influential *Reden*,[41] a work, as it has been called, "of infinite subjectivity," yet glowing with the fire of religious feeling. In it he clearly repudiated the orthodox miracle apologetic. "Miracle," he said, "is simply the religious name for event. Every event, even the most natural and unusual, becomes a miracle, as soon as the religious view of it can be the dominant. To me, all is miracle. In your sense the inexplicable and strange alone is miracle, in mine it is no miracle. The more religious you are the more miracle you would see everywhere. All disputing about single events, as to whether or not they are to be called miraculous, gives me a painful impression of the poverty and wretchedness of the religious sense of the combatants."[42] Likewise, in his great work, the *Glaubenslehre* (first published 1821–22) he rejects the whole notion of absolute miracle, while at the same time acknowledging and guarding the religious significance of the miraculous.[43] In regard to Christ's miracles he says they have no value for us who are separated from them in time and that "they are matter for scientific investigation." Of real present significance for us are the abiding spiritual workings of Christ.[44]

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[32] *Catholic Ency.*, Vol. X, p. 346.

[33] *Christ and the Critics* (Eng. tr., 2 vols., 1924), pp. 233–234, etc.

[34] See Pfleiderer's *Development of Theology in Germany since Kant* for the best statement of the philosophico-theological movement in Germany during the nineteenth century.

[35] The Eng. tr. appeared in 1800 (London). My references are to this edition.

[36] Cf. p. 495.

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[37] Cf. Fichte's *Popular Works* (Eng. tr. by Wm. Smith), 4th ed., 1889, Vol. I, p. 48. It is interesting to recall Kant's advice to Fichte in regard to the publication of this work. He suggested that Fichte should make the Censor "comprehend and approve the distinction between a *dogmatic belief*, raised beyond all doubt, and a mere *moral admission* resting on the insufficiency of reason to satisfy its own wants; for then the faith which good moral sentiment reposes upon Miracle may probably thus express itself: 'Lord, I believe' — that is, I *receive* it willingly, although I cannot *prove* it sufficiently — 'Help thou mine unbelief!' — that is, 'I have a moral faith in respect of all that I can draw from the miraculous narrative for the purposes of inward improvement, and I desire to possess an historical belief in so far as that can contribute to the same end. My unintentional non-belief is not confirmed unbelief.'" The distinction which Kant made is one which conservative apologetic in all countries has found it exceedingly difficult to recognize, or at least to approve. The recognition and approval of the distinction is, however, in the end inevitable.

[38] Eng. tr. under the title *Theory of Religion within the Boundary of Pure Reason* (Edin., 1838), p. 103.

Arising out of and inspired by these philosophic views there arose in Germany a new method of approach to Church History.

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[39] Eng. tr. by Sibree (New York, 1900), p. 326.

[40] Eng. tr., 1895, Vol. I, p. 219.

[41] The Eng. tr. (by Oman) appeared in 1893 under the title *On Religion — Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers.*

[42] Eng. tr., cited above, pp. 88–89.

[43] The *Glaubenslehre* (or to give it its correct title — *Der Christliche Glaube*) is given in a condensed English form by Cross in *The Theology of Schleiermacher* (Chicago, 1911). A complete English tr., *The Christian Faith*, has just (1928) been published under the editorship of H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart.

[44] Cf. *The Theology of Schleiermacher*, p. 220 (cited above), and *The Christian Faith*, pp. 448–449.

Baur in 1853 published his *Church History of the First Three Centuries*, in which, having discarded the idea of miracle, he sought in a severely historical manner to trace the rise of Christianity. "On what grounds," he asked, "can we regard Christianity itself as a phenomenon purely supernatural, as an absolute miracle introduced into the world's history without the operation of any natural causes, and therefore incapable of being comprehended as belonging to any historical connection, when we find in every direction, wherever we turn, numerous points of connection and affinity in which it is linked with the most intimate bonds to the whole history of the development of mankind? It contains nothing that was not conditioned by a series of causes and effects going before."[45] Such words sufficiently indicate the anti-miracle method of approach to early Church History, which has, in spite of the general repudiation of Baur's main historical conclusion, been very frequently employed since his day.

It is in large measure the influence of this same philosophic movement which has slowly undermined the "rational supernaturalism" — as it has been called by Pfleiderer — of early nineteenth-century England. Its influence, it is true, was very tardy, but this tardiness was inevitable in consequence both of the hold which conservative views had upon the national mind and of the difficulty involved in a *practical* nation welcoming metaphysical notions. Before indeed the full weight of such views was generally felt, a few Churchmen in Oriel College, Oxford — Keble, Pusey, Hurrell Froude and J. H. Newman — had taken alarm. They, it may not unfairly be said, had been completely unreceptive of the basal impulses of Protestantism, and as they saw the tide of liberalism beginning slowly to mount they initiated a retreat backward in time, in order to seek refuge in an infallible, dogmatic past. The consequences of that retreat are still with us, and are potent in many ways. Of the Oxford Movement, however, in spite of what we cannot but regard as its basal inconsistencies, this much can be truly said: it had a true appreciation of the magnitude of the new Liberal Movement in theology which was beginning to manifest itself. This, it saw, was not a

[45] 3d ed., Eng. tr., 1878, Vol. I, pp. 22–23.

light and unimportant "heresy" which could easily be interdicted. It involved nothing less, it felt, than a radically new type of apologetic for Christianity. Being fundamentally sceptical of the ability of the human intellect to construct such an apologetic, the Oxford Movement took refuge in a fictitious dogmatic past when the early Church was formulating its creed. Supernatural infallibility belonged *there* — this was the basal belief which afforded security from the advancing tempest of Liberalism. Alas! for them, this basal belief, the invalidity of which was already obvious to every fundamental thinker, has been slowly made impossible by historical research. It is one of the ironies of history that the Oxford Movement projected a translation into English of the Fathers of the Church, a labour begotten chiefly out of a love not for historic but for dogmatic certitude. The historic studies into those early centuries received an impetus from Pusey's *Library of the Fathers* (which began to appear in 1838), which has done much completely to invalidate the very idea which inspired the labours of that translation.[46]

It is not possible here to sketch adequately the history of British theological thought in its movement away from evidential supernaturalism during the nineteenth century. A few important names and movements must, however, be cited.

Erskine of Linlathen published in 1820 his first work, *Remarks on the Internal Evidence for the Truth of the Revealed Religion.* It is significant for our subject because of its wholehearted emphasis on *internal* evidence for the truth of Christianity, as distinct from the external evidences. "A belief of the miracles narrated in the New Testament does not constitute the faith of a Christian." Even should one after investigation, Erskine held, be left dissatisfied with "the chain of evidence" for miracles in the New Testament, that does not alter the deep spiritual revelation there contained. "All the promises of the Gospel are to faith in the Gospel, and to those moral qualities which faith produces; and we cannot believe that which we do not understand. We may believe that there is more in a thing than we can understand; or we may believe a fact, the cause or modes of which we do not understand; but our actual belief is necessarily limited by our actual understanding." [47] In another of his works, *The Brazen Serpent* (1831), he sets forth a thesis curiously similar to that in these days frequently maintained, viz., that the Church should regard the "healing miracles" of the New Testament not as "attestations of the Gospel," but as "essential parts of the Gospel," and that she lost the gift through "lack of faith." The teaching of Channing in America in the early part of the last century exercised, and still exercises, influence in support of Liberal Protestant apologetic. While he felt it necessary in his *Evidences of Christianity* [48] to defend "miracles" as one of these evidences, it is not difficult to note the supremacy in his own mind of the "internal evidences." He sought to vindicate the claim of Christianity to the character of a rational religion. "I have the strongest conviction, that Christianity is reason in its most perfect form, and therefore I plead for its disengagement from the irrational additions with which it has been clogged for ages." [49]

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[46] For the story of the translation of *The Library of the Fathers* from the sympathetic standpoint see Liddon's *Life of Pusey* (4 vols., 1893–97), Vol. I, Chap. 18. Polemical rather than historical aims did much to inspire the work. Pusey in the Prospectus spoke of the work as representing "a body of ancient Catholic truth, free from the errors alike of modern Rome and of Ultra Protestantism," and maintained the supreme value of Catholic antiquity, which, as he said, "is disparaged by Romanists in order to make way for the later Councils, and, by others in behalf of modern and private interpretations of Holy Scripture."

The Bridgewater treatises, first published in 1833–36, were directed by the Earl of Bridgewater to be written "On the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God, as manifested in the Creation, illustrating such work by all reasonable arguments." The significance for our subject of these once-famous treatises is in the subjects with which they deal and with which they do not deal. It is not therefore necessary here to emphasize what has not unjustly been termed "their special pleading and ignoring of the dark and terrible side of Nature." [50] The following were the subjects: *On the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God as*

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[47] *Op. cit.* (10th ed., Edin., 1878), Sec. 6.

[48] Glasgow ed., 1833.

[49] *Op. cit.*, p. 101. It is to be remembered that in 1841, the year before his death, he wrote to Martineau: "I see no inconsistency between admitting miracles, and resting Christianity on a spiritual basis." (See his Life by W. H. Channing (1880), Boston ed., p. 454.)

[50] Cf. *Life and Religion*, Joseph Leckie (1891), p. 171.

manifested in the adaptation of external Nature to the Moral and Intellectual Constitution of Man (Thomas Chalmers); *On the Adaptation of External Nature to the physical condition of Man* (Kidd); *Astronomy and General Physics considered with reference to Natural theology* (Whewell); *The Hand; its mechanism and vital endowments as evincing design* (Bell); *On Animal and Vegetable Physiology* (Roget); *On Geology and Mineralogy* (Buckland); *On the History, Habits and Instincts of Animals* (Kirby); *On Chemistry, Meteorology, and the Function of Digestion* (Prout) — a list sufficiently indicative of the wide scope of the inquiry. They deal exclusively with what used to be regarded as "Natural Theology." The so-called "credentials of Christianity" had no place in the discussion. It is surely not without significance that in a series of volumes written "on the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God" no volume was devoted to the evidences of those "attributes" in miracles. This omission, it may be remembered, was recognized by many at the time of the publication of the series; and an endeavour was made to remedy it in the publication of what was called *The Ninth Bridgewater Treatise* by Babbage (1837), where the subject of miracle was specifically dealt with. The author recognized, however, that he was passing beyond the bounds of the subject to which the Treatises were restricted, and in his Preface made his apologia for entering upon what he called "The first connecting link between natural religion and revealed."[51] A few years after the publication of these Treatises, James Martineau (in 1841) was asserting "that the moral and spiritual character of the religion makes the miracles credible, not that the miracles make the religion so";[52] and in regard to the related question of "Inspiration" was boldly declaring, "we must learn to dissociate moral from scientific truth, and not expect to find the one because we have the other."[53] These views he maintained with increasing philosophic cogency throughout his long life. In 1842 Thomas Arnold, whose influence, in spite of the fact that he wrote no important theological work, was so potent in support of all liberal views, delivered his *Introductory Lectures on Modern History*, in which he quite clearly revealed the trend of his own mind away from the traditional view of miracle. While on the one hand, in dealing with the untrustworthiness of ancient historians like Bede, when they narrate miracles, he maintained that "the miracles of the Gospel and those of later history do not stand on the same ground," and was loath to apply his miracle-scepticism to such Gospel miracles; yet on the other hand he regarded it as "a most hasty and untenable inference" to conclude that if a miracle really happened "it gives the seal of God's approbation to all the belief of him who performed it." [54] Previously in 1840 he had written to Dr. Hawkins in regard to the latter's Bampton Lectures: "You complain of those persons who judge of a Revelation, not by its evidence, but by its substance. It has always seemed to me that its substance is a most essential part of its evidence; and that miracles wrought in favour of what was foolish or wicked, would only prove Manicheism." [55] About the middle of the century men like F. D. Maurice and Robertson of Brighton showed by their writings and preachings that they were emancipating themselves from the rigidities of orthodox miracle apologetic, though they were too early to attempt any serious endeavour to construct the new apologetic which was implicit in their liberalisms. In 1859 appeared one of the most remarkable books that had yet appeared on the subject of the miraculous, a book of which it has been said, as we think quite correctly, that "nothing so revolutionary had as yet been published by a clergyman." [56] It was called, significantly enough, *The Order of Nature;* its author was the Rev. Baden Powell, the author of the contention-provoking essay already referred to, "On the Study of the Evidences of Christianity," which was to appear the following year in *Essays and Reviews*. The historical importance of this volume arises from the fact that it was the most wholehearted attempt yet made by a clergyman in England to approach the question of miracles from the standpoint of natural science. His aim, as he himself expressed it in the Preface, was "to supply what, as far as I am aware, has been hitherto wanting to our theological and philosophic literature — a perfectly impartial, candid, unpolemical discussion of the subject of *miracles*, imperatively demanded at the present day, in immediate connexion with the vast progress of physical knowledge." In America, in 1858, Horace Bushnell published his *Nature and the Supernatural*, in which, while he firmly defends the supernatural, regarding it as "compatible with Nature and subject to fixed laws," he yet clearly manifests a tendency away from the evidential view of miracle. After all his arguments *pro* and *con* he comes back, as he tells us, to "the grand first principle of evidence" on which he rests. This is none other than "the character and doctrine of Jesus." "It is no ingenious fetches of argument that we want; no external testimony, gathered here and there from the records of past ages, suffices to end our doubts; but it is the new sense opened in us by Jesus himself . . . of the miraculous grandeur of his life; a glorious agreement felt between his works and his person, such that his miracles themselves are proved to us in our feeling, believed in by that inward testimony. *On this inward testimony we are willing to stake everything.*"[57] (Italics ours.)

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[51] *Op. cit.*, p. VI.

[52] *Life and Letters* by Drummond and Upton, Vol. I, p. 169.

[53] *Life and Letters*, Vol. I, p. 166.

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[54] *Op. cit.* (Oxford, 1842 ed.), see pp. 133 and 136.

[55] His *Life* by Stanley (6th ed., 1846), p. 533.

[56] So Benn in *History of English Rationalism* (etc.), p. 97.

It would be a mistake to suppose that this emphasis on "internal evidence" for Christianity passed without vehement protest from defenders of traditional apologetic. Mansel in his Bampton Lectures in 1858 went so far as to declare that "the crying evil of the present day in religious controversy is the neglect or contempt of the external evidences of Christianity."[58] Such and similar protests against the tendency to evacuate miracle of "evidential" significance by no means, however, minimized that tendency. In 1873 Matthew Arnold already noted that the "time-spirit" was "sapping the proof from miracles."[59] In 1881 and 1882 respectively appeared from the pen of Robertson Smith the two volumes, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church* and *The Prophets of Israel and Their Place in History*. These have a signal historic importance, in as much as they were the finest fruits that had

[57] 4th ed., 1859, New York, p. 365.

[58] *The Limits of Religious Thought* (Oxford, 1858), p. 238.

[59] Cf. *Literature and Dogma*, pp. 132–134.

yet appeared in England of the endeavour to envisage Old Testament "revelation" through the medium of historico-philosophic views. Speaking of Isaiah, he said, and the words are indicative as well of his own position in regard to the miraculous or the supernatural: "The supernatural is not something added to and differing from the common course of things. Everything real is supernatural, and supernatural in the same degree."[60] He saw the true evidences of Christianity "not in the miraculous circumstances of this or that particular revelation, but in the intrinsic character of the scheme of revelation as a whole."[61] Also in 1882 appeared Seeley's *Natural Religion*, written in the same beauty of style and spirit as characterized his previously published *Ecce Homo*. He sought to arrive at a "Christianity which is independent of supernaturalism but at the same time is historic not abstract, and does not in any way break with the Christian tradition or discard the Christian documents as obsolete." He acknowledged that if the miracles of the Bible were ultimately rejected, "the orthodox system" would undoubtedly be damaged; but maintained firmly that true Christianity would not be damaged.[62]

In tracing the movement in theological thought away from evidential supernaturalism mention should also be made of the increasing tendency during the latter half of the century towards the "philosophizing" of theology. T. H. Green, the brothers Caird, and Martineau are important British figures in this connection. T. H. Green complained of "the habit of identifying Christianity with the collection of propositions which constitute the written New Testament"; and what he said of the current doctrine of inspiration is indicative of his attitude to all orthodox apologetic. "The doctrine of 'inspiration,' in that sense according to which every scriptural proposition contains some absolute truth, from which trains of dogmatic reasoning may be deduced, is indeed but an accident of that enfeebled Christianity which is all that mankind has yet been able to assimilate."[63]

[60] *The Prophets of Israel*, p. 313.
[61] *Op. cit.*, p. 16.
[62] *Op. cit.* (London, 1882), p. 177.
[63] His *Works* (1888), Vol. III, p. 160.

J. Caird declared that "we do not pay any real homage to the supernatural by disconnecting it as much as possible from the natural and the human," and that "Christianity finds its highest evidence in the response which its truths awaken in the spiritual intelligence."[64] In his Gifford Lectures, likewise, he came nearest to repudiating the ordinary miracle apologetic of his day when he spoke of "the disproportionate value attached to miracles," and even went so far as to say that "such events are lower and not higher manifestations of divine agency than the order of things we commonly refer to natural causes."[65] Edward Caird, in his Gifford Lectures, revealed, even more clearly than his brother, antagonism towards interventionist apologetic. After tracing the rise of the miraculous belief, he went on to declare: "it would be a fatal mistake for any spiritual or idealistic philosophy . . . to admit that the general course of things is to be explained by nature and necessity, and that the need for a higher explanation arises only when a break is made in that course. It would be dangerous for it to even admit that in such breaks we have better evidence of the existence of a higher power than is to be found in the ordinary course of things."[66] In the same Lectures the author revealed his acceptance of historico-critical principles in dealing with the Gospel "miracles."[67] Martineau's last work, *The Seat of Authority in Religion* (London, 1890), set forth more clearly than any of his former works his repudiation of the whole traditional miracle apologetic. "Signs and wonders" he regarded as having no "religious validity," maintaining also that a theology which regards them as having such validity involves "the false postulate that the cosmic causalities and the Divine are mutually exclusive, and that you cannot be sure of the touch of God till you are outside of nature."[68]

The same movement away from traditional miracle apologetic can clearly be discerned also in nineteenth-century France, though it is not possible here to do more than mention a few significant names. In 1850 Colani and Scherer founded *La Revue de Théo-*

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[64] *Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion* (1880), p. 347.

[65] *The Fundamental Ideas of Christianity* (1899), Vol. I, p. 136.

[66] *The Evolution of Religion* (2nd ed., 1894), Vol. I, pp. 310 and 319.

[67] *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 114.

[68] *Op. cit.*, p. 592.

logie et de la Philosophie Chrétienne, the definite aim of which, according to Colani, was to show the inadequacy both of the orthodox Protestant apologetic and of the Rationalism of the middle nineteenth century in France. The latter of these Colani regarded as "a reaction called forth by the doctrine of salvation by magic — such as is taught by orthodoxy." [69] However that may be, the whole French Protestant movement of thought associated with such names as Colani, Scherer, A. Réville, Reuss, Pécaut, and Coquerel was definitely hostile to all apologetic for religion based upon the idea of evidential supernaturalism. Scherer, who wrote on *The Miracles of Jesus Christ*, denied that they were to be regarded as proofs of his divinity.[70] Pécaut, in one of the most outspoken books in opposition to the traditional idea of miracle of the time, declared that the fundamental question for the theology of his day was "*de savoir si la religion, la foi religieuse avec tous les biens qui en découlent, repose sur une autorité extérieure, surnaturelle, indiscutable, absolue; ou, si, dans cet ordre spirituel comme dans tous les autres, la foi repose sur la vue directe des choses, sur la connaissance de la vérité par nos facultés naturelles*." He went on also to declare that the Christ conceived by traditional apologetic was "*un être anormal, fantastique, dont l'idée est aussi choquante pour notre sens moral et intellectuel que l'idée d'une doctrine miraculeuse ou d'un événement miraculeux et qui, loin de plaire à notre sens religieux, le scandalise par sa grossièreté*." [71] Coquerel carried the war into the very camp of traditional apologetic when he maintained that the liberal Christianity he stood for was not "*une forme quelconque du christianisme, mais sa forme la plus légitime, la plus pure et la plus féconde pour l'avenir*." [72] The other leaders of the French Protestant movement of the middle nineteenth century stood by similar positions.[73]

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[69] See *Progress of Religious Thought in the Protestant Church of France*, p. 4.

[70] See Scherer's article in *Progress of Religious Thought in the Protestant Church of France*, pp. 317–342.

[71] *Le Christianisme Libéral et le Miracle*, F. Pécaut (Paris, 1869), p. 57.

[72] *Profession de Foi Chrétienne* (Paris, 1864), p. 16.

[73] A History of the French Protestant Critical movement written from the conservative standpoint is found in Hurst's *History of Rationalism*, Chap. 16. The same movement away from interventionist apologetic might be traced in other

Thus as the nineteenth century moved onwards, the traditional evidential notion of miracle became in all countries less and less satisfactory. It had more and more opponents. The most systematic attack upon it which had yet appeared was published anonymously in 1874. It was the once-famous *Supernatural Religion* whose author was Mr. Walter Cassels. Six editions appeared in the year of publication. Of this learned work it may be said that its great defect was its exclusively destructive criticism and its lack of appreciation of religious values and truths; though it is also well to remember that the author's aim was not to construct a new apologetic but to seek to destroy an old one. The attack upon traditional apologetic became severer through the progress of the studies of natural science and of comparative religion. On the one hand, science, which regarded all the phenomena of the universe as subject to orderly formulation, asked how any one event in time could be more evidential than another. On the other hand the comparative study of religions, besides reminding apologists for Christian "miracles" that such were recorded in all sacred literatures, slowly engendered a new way of regarding the religions of mankind, making it less and less necessary to regard "miracles" as *proofs* of the truth of Christianity. The influence of this study has by no means yet had its full impact upon Christian apologetic. The facts have been slowly gathered. The larger and more important question — the bearing of these facts on Christian theology — has yet fully to be weighed. Suffice it to say, for our present theme, that the influence of this study is in the direction of completely invalidating the old type of miracle apologetic. Max Müller, in his Gifford Lectures for 1892, sufficiently indicated what he conceived to be the bearing of this

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countries. Reference perhaps should be made here to Holland where the forces opposed to the traditional idea of miracle became during the nineteenth century exceedingly powerful. We refer the reader to the following for illustrations of this theme: *Religious Thought in Holland during the Nineteenth Century* by J. H. MacKay (1911), and *Protestant Modernism in Holland* by E. C. Vanderlaan (1924). In the latter Herderschee is quoted as follows: "Like the red thread that is woven through the cordage of the English navy, so through the whole history of the modern school in Holland runs *anti-supernaturalism*" (*op. cit.*, p. 116). This italicized term of course needs elucidation.

study when he said: "Few only will now deny that Christians can be Christians without what was called belief in miracles; nay, few will deny that they are better Christians without than with that belief." [74]

Further, the opposition of science and the comparative study of religion to the evidential theory of miracle was reinforced by two other forces which in differing ways began to assail its validity. On the one hand, religious experience, deeply exercised with the moral enigmas of the universe yet unalterably convinced that Love is on the throne, began to be dissatisfied with a notion of the miraculous which involved an evidential interposition of Omnipotence for the sake of the few. On the other hand, religious philosophy, while having little to say about the critical question of the historicity or otherwise of specific "miracles," by its emphasis on Immanence became less and less sympathetic with theories of evidential interventionism. What used to be termed "dogmatic" theology became increasingly irksome to religious minds. In its place came the historical and philosophic approaches to "the Queen of the Sciences." The whole series of Gifford Lectures manifested this tendency. They were begun in the year 1888 and their purpose was to promote and diffuse "the study of Natural Theology in the widest sense of the term — in other words 'the knowledge of God.'" From France at the end of the century came one of the most noteworthy manifestations of this method of approach — the brilliant *Esquisse d'une Philosophie de la Religion* by Auguste Sabatier of the Paris School of Theology (1897),[75] a book the clarity of whose style makes it more fascinating to read than any novel.

Continuously assailed thus from many sides, miracle has come to be regarded by an increasing number as less and less important for Christianity. So far from being essential to the Christian faith the whole tendency of "modernist" apologetic is to regard miracle as unnecessary. "Christianity remains in its essence entire even if miracle be rejected." [76] "Miracles must be relegated to the sphere of pious opinion . . . the Christian Revelation can stand without them." [77] These are but two of innumerable twentieth-century judgments that might be cited — all leading essentially to this: Miracle may be given up without detriment to the substance of the Christian faith.

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[74] *Theosophy or Psychological Religion*, pp. 24–25.

[75] Eng. tr., *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion.*

[76] Gordon, *Religion and Miracle*, p. XII.

This being without any manner of doubt the marked tendency of theological thought today, it is well to seek to understand clearly its meaning. What exactly does it involve? Is the present-day indifference to miracle a complete break in the continuity of Christian witness for nineteen hundred years? Or is it an unfolding growth of germs of truth ever latent in that witness? Does it mean that modern Christianity is becoming unfaithful to her priceless heritage of truth? Or does it rather mean a sincere and truthful effort after a more essential fidelity to that heritage? Is the almost universal scientific scepticism to miracles mistaken, and is it essentially antagonistic to religion? These are the questions to be borne firmly in mind in any discussion on this high theme.

Now, frankly to confront such questions as these and frankly to note the radically divergent answers given to them by two opposed schools of thought, both Christian in the sense of being both associated with the Christian Church — two schools which for want of better terms we can only refer to by the partly misleading terms Traditionalist and Modernist — will beget at least *one* secure conclusion. This is, that the term "miracle" engenders immense confusion of thought. A clarification of the present turbidity of thought in regard thereto is one of the chief *desiderata.* The term "miracle" carries with it much or little according to the sense in which it is employed, and it is this "much" or "little" which finally decides the attitude to the whole question.

An illustration of this fact, patent to all who have grappled with the question, will serve better than a chapter to make the point clear. For the purposes of the illustration let Harnack be the spokesman of "liberal" views. He says in his popular lectures *What is Christianity?:* "The question of miracles is of relative indifference in comparison with everything else which is to be found in the Gospels. It is not miracles that matter; the question on which everything turns is whether we are helplessly yoked to an inexorable necessity, or whether a God exists who rules and governs and whose power to compel Nature we can move by prayer and make a part of our experience." [78] This utterance makes two assertions: *first*, that the events in the Gospels known as "miracles" are "of relative indifference," they do not matter; *second*, that the one question which does matter and which the writer is tenacious to defend is that God rules and governs and that His power may be even in a sense said "to compel Nature." Now the answer of "traditionalist" apologetic for miracle to this position is, if we may venture to interpret it, as follows. The *second* assertion it wholeheartedly agrees with; the *first* assertion it disagrees with for the reason that these Gospel miracles, treated as unimportant, it regards as a main verification of the truth expressed by the second contention. The position thus is as follows: "Traditionalist" apologetic regards the question of "miracles" and the question of God ruling and governing His world as *one* question; "modernist" apologetic regards them as *two* quite separate questions. The first maintains, or at least fears, that the rejection of Gospel miracles will lead to the rejection of the "God who rules and governs." The second, so far from believing that the rejection of these "miracles" involves the rejection of a "God who rules and governs," declares firmly that the rejection of the first does not matter, while the rejection of the second very profoundly does.

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[77] Inge, *Outspoken Essays,* First Series, pp. 32–33.

Thus we come to the point that both those who regard miracles as of essential importance and those who regard them as of quite secondary significance are yet in agreement here — God really rules and governs, and we are not "yoked to an inexorable necessity." Quite obviously, miracles are conceived in very different ways by these respective camps. Quite obviously, further, the important question is: Is the maintenance of the Gospel events called "miracles" essential to the belief in the personal acting God of Christianity? In the following discussion it will not be possible, nor if possible would it be in any degree justifiable, for us to hide our own attitude to this quite basal question.

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[78] P. 31, Eng. tr.

The importance or otherwise, therefore, of this question of "miracles" depends upon the connotation given to the term. The question of questions is, as Carlyle's Professor put it, "What specially is a miracle?"[79] At this point, therefore, it seems necessary to point out the sufficiently remarkable variety of views as to what constitutes a miracle. We shall then be in a position more clearly to understand the almost infinite confusion resulting from the use of a term which few use in precisely the same sense.

John Stuart Mill's well-known definition of a miracle is: "To constitute a miracle, a phenomenon must take place without having been preceded by any antecedent phenomenal conditions sufficient again to reproduce it. . . . The test of a miracle is, Were there present in the case such external conditions, such second causes we may call them, that whenever these conditions or causes reappear the event will be reproduced? If there were, it is not a miracle; if there were not, it is."[80] This definition is quite clear, and from the scientific point of view entirely satisfactory. But a moment's consideration will show that it does not carry us far. If an event were to happen today which we could not explain by "antecedent phenomenal conditions," there are few, if any, who would assert it to be a miracle. What does this mean? Simply this, that the majority of people, scientific and religious alike, believe that there are "antecedent phenomenal conditions" to explain the event, even if at present we cannot discover them. Huxley in his *Essay on Hume* gave an extreme illustration of this attitude. "If a dead man did come to life, the fact would be evidence not that any law of nature had been violated but that those laws, even when they express the results of a long and uniform experience, are necessarily based on incomplete knowledge, and are to be held only on grounds of more or less justifiable expectation."[81] Huxley says, in other words, that if a dead man should rise to life, there must be certain "antecedent phenomenal conditions," even if in our present state of knowledge we cannot discover them. Anatole France expressed the same view as Huxley when he told us that if a dead man were raised to life before our eyes, "no miracle would be proved, unless we knew what life is and death is, and that we shall never know."[82] Hence the raising of the dead, if it be proved as a fact, is not a miracle according to the definition of John Stuart Mill, for that definition necessitates the absence of "antecedent phenomenal conditions," a necessity which probably Mill himself would never admit. Hence, even his clear definition is of little value, for it is a definition of something which is to the definer himself an impossible supposition. This definition of a miracle is as if one were to define a "square circle," as a figure which has all the properties both of a square and of a circle.

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[79] *Sartor Resartus*, Chap. "Natural Supernaturalism."

[80] *Three Essays on Religion*, 4th ed., 1875, pp. 224–25.

[81] *Essay on Hume*, p. 157.

It would not be difficult to collect numerous definitions of miracle given through the centuries, based upon the same idea as Mill's, viz., absence of "antecedent phenomenal conditions." The definition of Thomas Aquinas, who led the way for most subsequent miracle apologetic, was: "*miraculum quod fit praeter ordinem totius naturae creatae . . . Solus Deus miracula facere potest.*"[83] Here "*praeter ordinem totius naturae creatae*" is roughly equivalent to Mill's "antecedent phenomenal conditions." Pascal's definition is along the same lines: "Miracle is an effect which exceeds the natural power of the means employed; and an effect not miraculous is one which does not exceed the power employed."[84] Here also the phrase "the natural power of the means employed" corresponds roughly to Mill's "antecedent phenomenal conditions." Hume's well-known definition moves along the same line of thought: "A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature."[85] The term "violation" exposes him to criticism from the point of view of the scientist,[86] but so do all definitions which speak of the absence of antecedent phenomenal conditions; for this absence, like Hume's "violation," is rejected by the scientist in accordance with the principles of his investigation. Kant's definition is more carefully expressed than Hume's, but is governed by the same ideas. Miracles, he said, are "events brought about by causes, with the laws of whose efficiency we are and must remain totally unacquainted." [87] He did not of course believe that the human reason was competent to say of any event that it is a miracle in this sense. Hence he is defining something which to himself can never exist. His is a terse definition of the generally accepted idea of miracle, to which he himself refuses belief. Again, therefore, a definition like Hume's and John Stuart Mill's, of that which the definer himself rejects.

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[82] *The Garden of Epicurus* (Eng. tr., 1908), p. 177.

[83] *Summa I*, Q. CX, 4.

[84] *Pensées sur les Miracles.*

[85] *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, p. 120.

[86] Cf. Huxley's *Essay on Hume.*

Definitions by conservative apologetic move along the same line of thought. Among the innumerable instances which might be given, a few only need be cited. Douglas, in his once famous *The Criterion* (1754), defined miracle as "an extraordinary work, in which the interposition of a supernatural Power is clear and indisputable." [88] Mozley defined miracles as "visible suspensions of the order of nature for a providential purpose," and did not hesitate to use the phrase "violations of physical law." [89] The late Dr. A. B. Bruce regarded miracles as "a breach in the continuity of nature" and in his early days defended them as such.[90] A quite recent definition is on similar lines. A miracle, says Dr. Gore, is "an occurrence in the process of nature of something which nature, that is the experienced order, cannot account for, and which constrains men to recognize a special or extraordinary action of God, calling attention to a special purpose." [91] Here again that which nature "cannot account for" is equivalent to Mill's "absence of antecedent phenomenal conditions."

Most French definitions of miracle, both on the part of orthodox Catholic apologists and on the part of their scientific opponents, move along the same line of thought. "*Une manifestation de Dieu par une œuvre sensible que nul agent créé ne peut produire*," [92] is only one of many such definitions. Roman Catholic miracle apologetic differs from Protestant in this that it definitely maintains that miracles may be wrought by living men, by departed saints, and by angels. While to the Roman Church miracle is always the effect of the intervention of Omnipotence, the "miracles" of the saints and angels are explained in a threefold way: (1) by their prayers invoking the intervention of Omnipotence; (2) by "disposing or accommodating the materials, as it is said of the angels that they will in the resurrection collect the dust of the dead bodies that these may be re-animated by the Divine Power"; and (3) by "performing some other act in co-operation with the Divine agency as in the application of relics or of visits to holy places which God has marked out for special and extraordinary favours of this kind." [93] *Practically* speaking, however, the only difference between the Roman Catholic standpoint and such Protestant definitions as we have considered is that the former includes in the "supernatural," which is the efficient cause of the "miracle," men, whether living or departed, and angels. The definition of miracle in the historic Encyclopedia of Diderot and d'Alembert was: "*Un effêt qui n'est la suite d'aucune des lois connues de la nature, ou qui ne sauroit s'accorder avec ces lois. Ainsi un miracle étant une suspension de quelqu'une de ces lois, il ne sauroit venir d'une cause moins puissante que celle qui a établi elle-même ces lois.*" Another French definition is in similar terms from a scientific thinker: "*Un fait, ou un phénomène, anormal ou le paraissant tel . . . contraire aux lois constatées de la nature et attribué à l'action volontaire et consciente d'un être, dieu, saint ou démon.*" [94] Here again in regard to French definitions of miracle we have the interesting fact that miracle is defined both by those who accept it and by those who reject it in almost similar terms — the latter, like Hume, Kant, Mill, defining that which they can never admit.

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[87] *Theory of Religion within the Boundary of Pure Reason*, p. 106.
[88] *Op. cit.* (London ed., 1754), p. 5.
[89] Bampton Lectures. *On Miracles* (3d ed., 1872), pp. 5, 8.
[90] *The Miraculous Element in the Gospels*, p. 11.
[91] *Belief in God*, p. 231.
[92] *Le Miracle et ses contrefaçons*, De Bonniot (Paris, 1887), p. 22.

We have given these definitions, both from those who reject and those who accept miracles, and they all move in the same orbit of thought. On the one hand is Nature, on the other hand is the Supernatural. And a miracle is defined as either the violation or the abrogation of the first by the second, or as that which is "beyond" (*praeter*) the first, and therefore is only to be accounted for by the second.

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[93] See *Catholic Ency.*, Vol. 10, p. 351.

[94] L. de Milloué in *Conférences faites au Musée Guimet* (Paris, 1907), p. 122.

There is another way of defining miracles which seeks to escape from this dualism, by setting forth miracle as "within" Nature; as, to use Mill's words, *having* "antecedent phenomenal conditions"; or, as, to use Hume's words, *not* "violating the laws of Nature"; or, as, to use Kant's terminology, *not* "brought about by causes with the laws of whose efficiency we are and must remain totally unacquainted." Alfred Russel Wallace's definition is: "Any act or event necessarily implying the existence or agency of superhuman intelligences."[95] Here a scientist, sympathetic with a spiritual interpretation of the universe, accepts miracle without believing that in any sense it is contrary to or beyond Nature. The events he narrates and calls miracles are all events which he regards as explicable, even though they be events which at the time of their occurrence could not be explained. Miracles, then, according to this point of view, are events not outside Nature. We may not yet know their antecedent conditions, but they have such if we can only discover them. They are explicable by scientific law, for every event comes within "law." They may, in accordance with Alfred Russel Wallace's conception, be due to unknown living agencies, Supernatural or Divine; but since these agencies come within the sphere of scientific investigation they are still within Nature. In regard to this definition it may for the present suffice to say that what Alfred Russel Wallace would call a miracle, Hume, Mill, and others would, in accordance with their definitions, deny to be such.

There is still another series of definitions, which, in our judgment to the resultant considerable confusion of thought, seeks to stand by *both* the former positions. On the one hand, it is suggested that a miracle is outside the sphere of Nature and, at the same time, that it is finally explicable. Locke's well-known definition of a miracle comes within this category: "A sensible operation, which being above the comprehension of the spectator, and in his opinion contrary to the established course of Nature, is taken by him to be Divine."[96] The two phrases, "in his opinion" and "taken by him," indicate the resultant confusion. A miracle here is defined in terms of an opinion which may afterwards be changed. If, for instance, it is afterwards found that the "sensible operation" is *not* contrary to the established course of Nature, does it therefore cease to be a miracle, and will the spectator take it no longer to be Divine? Should this be so, a miracle has been defined in terms of a merely possible interpretation. This is not satisfactory; it leads to much confusion of thought. It may perhaps be pointed out that Locke himself was conscious of this objection. He felt indeed that this was an objection which could not be avoided by any definition of miracle. "It being agreed that a miracle must be that which surpasses the force of Nature in the established steady laws of cause and effect, nothing can be taken to be a miracle but what is judged to exceed those laws. Now everyone being able to judge of those laws only by his own acquaintance with Nature, and notions of its force (which are different in different men), it is unavoidable that that should be a miracle to one which is not so to another." Now it is indeed unavoidable that men's knowledge of the laws of Nature should vary with their scientific knowledge and training. But that unavoidability does not seem any valid reason why miracles should be defined in terms of our partial knowledge. At any rate, those who thus define miracles leave in the mind of the candid scientific inquirer today the suspicion that they desire to save miracles for religion and yet, at the same time, to leave the way open for escape from the charge of being unscientific, if an event which they have claimed to be a miracle be afterwards explained by natural law. Another definition open to this objection is that in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible:* "An event manifesting purpose, occurring in the physical world, which cannot be accounted for by any of its *known* forces, and which therefore we ascribe to a spiritual cause."[97] The suggestion implicit in this definition is that we ascribe the event to spiritual agency because we can find no other force to explain it. But the "known" forces of today may be considerably augmented tomorrow. And if a force at present unknown be discovered which accounts for the event, is it any longer a miracle, and is a spiritual cause ruled out? These are among the questions that arise in the mind when we talk about "known" forces. In the interests of clarity and consistency of thought it is to be hoped that this third type of definition will not again be used. When Renan wrote "Miracle is not the unexplained: it is a formal derogation, in the name of a particular volition, from known laws,"[98] he was striving after this clarity and exactitude of thought, and with this endeavour every careful thinker must have the fullest sympathy. In the interest of our own clarity and consistency here it seems well to point out that our reason for refusing to accept Renan's position regarding the miraculous is not that we contend for the view of miracles against which he contends. We are indeed at one with him in refusing to recognize anywhere a derogation from law. Our reason for criticizing him in a later chapter is that in spite of his sincere endeavour after clarity, he confused the issue by failing to see that there is a truth in the miraculous idea which does not fall with the fall of his, and the generally accepted, view of a "miracle."

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[95] *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, p. 5.

[96] *Discourse on Miracles.*

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[97] Art., "Miracle."

There is yet another way of seeking to define miracle, which seeks to keep clear of confusing terms such as "nature" and "law," and merely asserts that it is an act of God. "A miracle may be defined to be an event in the external world, brought about by the immediate efficiency or simple volition of God," was the definition of the elder Dr. Hodge of Princeton.[99] Miracles, says the *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, are "wonders performed by supernatural power as signs of some special mission or gift and explicitly ascribed to God."[100] "An occasional evidence of direct Divine power in an action striking and unusual, yet by its beneficence pointing to the goodness of God,"[101] is a recent Protestant definition along similar lines. Wendland says, "Fundamentally miracle means just that there is a living God": "to believe in the living God and to believe in miracle are the same thing."[102] Now this may be true, but it does not, as of course Wendland knew, solve the problem. The main question still remains, How are we to relate the idea of the miraculous to everything else we know. While it is wise, in the interests of clarity, to exclude such terms as "nature" from a definition, the clarity unfortunately is achieved at the expense of not facing the real issue.

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[98] *Les Apôtres*, p. xlvii (French ed.).

[99] *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I, p. 618.

[100] Art., "Miracles."

[101] *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Art., "Miracles," p. 676.

[102] Wendland, *Miracles and Christianity*, p. 1.

These modes of defining miracle reveal such fundamental divergence of thought as to lead to hopeless confusion unless we can draw clear lines of distinction. The same word "miracle" means quite different things to one who thinks like Hume, to another who thinks like A. R. Wallace, and to another who thinks in terms of modern conservative apologetic. Such a sentence as the following from Sir Oliver Lodge indicates the confusion almost inherent in the present use of the term: "Miracles lie all around us: only they are not miraculous."[103] On perusing such a sentence one feels it would be well if we could forget the word "miracle" altogether and find another word to express what we have in mind. Instead of one word, however, several would be necessary. Writers give their own content of meaning to the term and then take it for granted that such is the right or legitimate content. A critical reader, who gives a different content of meaning to the term, will therefore find it necessary to qualify every assertion of his writer in regard to the matter. In consequence there is no subject in which it is more difficult to escape turbidity and ambiguity of thought than in a discussion on miracles. The confusion unfortunately tends to become greater in these days of the investigation of remarkable and wonderful happenings. Popular writers call wireless communication a "miracle." Others will instance events which reveal supernormal influence of mind or spirit over matter as "miracles." "Miracles," says a recent writer in *Spiritual Healing*, are "supranormal events, for which at present we are unable to assign any cause," though he recognizes the possible confusion by putting "miracles" in quotation marks.[104] Others of more philosophic temperament will see the miraculous in any and every normal intervention of mind in material nature — in for example the lifting of my arm, the propulsion of my body in walking, and all such kindred commonplace facts. Lord Kelvin used the word in this sense when he said: "Every action of human free-will is a miracle to physical and chemical and mathematical science." [105] Earl Balfour uses the term "miracle" in this same sense. Speaking of the fact that the course of material nature is plainly modified by the purposive intervention of mental influences, he says, "as such is what most people mean by miracle, it would seem to follow, not merely that miracles are of constant occurrence, but that man's main occupation is to perform them." [106] The illustrations that Balfour gives of this "purposive intervention of mental influences" — raising one's legs; cultivating one's garden — are, however, quite certainly *not* what most people mean by a miracle. Nevertheless the fact remains that Balfour thinks so, and feels therefore justified in referring to such events as miracles.

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[103] Cf. *Man and the Universe*, p. 68 (cheap ed.).

[104] *Spiritual Healing* by H. Anson (1923), p. 184.

How then is it possible to maintain clarity of thought when one term is capable of so many different interpretations? The difficulty is serious. Yet we have to acknowledge it is one inherent in the capacity of the human mind to think new thoughts and discern new truths. As our conceptions change, often we get no new terms to express these changed conceptions. We employ an old term which carries with it age-long associations, an old term which has become part and parcel of a philosophy which the new knowledge compels us to discard. "Miracle" is such a word. It remains as a relic of an intensely dualistic way of regarding God and Nature. And even though few of us any longer accept that dualism — which placed the natural in such complete separation from the supernatural, which spoke of violation, suspension, intrusion, intervention, etc. — yet whenever we use the term "miracle," in spite of ourselves, the old philosophy follows the word into our minds, like an enveloping fog that often comes with a change of wind, and clouds the whole issue. What a recent writer has said about the term "revelation" is just as true and appropriate to "miracle": "It seems impossible to abandon a familiar word, though on reflection we see that it begs the question; and equally impossible to enlarge its meaning. We cannot shake ourselves free from misleading connotations of many familiar words in theology, which were selected, and got their popular meaning indelibly stamped on them, at a time when they expressed accurately enough the prevailing thought. Still less can we get rid of the words. The thought may have passed away in reality, but the word remains, not only as a witness to past thought, but as a temple that gives shelter and sanctity and keeps it alive." [107]

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[105] See a letter of Kelvin in *The Times*, May 4, 1903, on "Religion and Science."
[106] *Theism and Thought*, p. 190.

Many of our discussions are governed by the confusion that thus arises. Those who argue against miracle argue against it in the former dualistic and "violation" sense. Those who argue for miracles seek to maintain that this sense is not theirs, and that therefore the arguments of the former do not touch them. And so the discussion goes on, confusion ever becoming worse confounded. It may be true, as the late Dr. Sanday said at the Anglican Church Congress in 1902, "when we find the definition for which we are searching, the miraculous will no longer be a problem"; or as he said in his posthumous work, *The Position of the Liberal Theology*, "for me the question is one of definition." [108] But shall we ever get a definition to satisfy all? There is little to suggest the possibility, unless, indeed, first of all a fairly generally agreed upon philosophy of the natural and the supernatural is arrived at. The definition that would have suited a historian like Dr. Sanday himself in 1902, when he stood by the position of *Outlines of the Life of Christ*, would not have suited him in 1920, when he published *Divine Over-ruling*. Careful definition of terms is important for clearing the issue, and for giving scope for clarifying discussion. But, after all, the discussion is not about definitions; it is about the underlying philosophy, which itself decides the definition. When men have different philosophies of the "natural" and "supernatural," how is it possible to get a definition of miracle to satisfy them all? As well expect the man who believes in God to define "sin" in the same way as the man who does not. Hence, while we plead for the use of terms in an accepted sense to avoid confusion, at the same time we suggest that a definition at the beginning of a discussion is useless, even if it were possible. How is it possible to get a satisfactory definition of an alleged event called a "miracle" when there is disagreement even as to the possibility of its having happened?

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[107] J. D. Wilson in *Cambridge Theological Essays*, p. 225.

[108] P. 16.

The question then as to the importance or unimportance of this issue, while it thus depends on definition, leads us back to those basal questions from which definitions spring. All who have given serious thought to the question or have made any sustained endeavour to follow the age-long discussions in regard to it, must recognize this. The issue is of vital importance because of the central questions involved. "This is the one crucial question," wrote Dr. Sanday, whose lifetime of historical investigations led in the end to this very matter, "which brings to a head and includes all the rest."[109] When Eucken says, "A religion entirely devoid of it (miracle) is a self contradiction, the only question is what we are to understand by it,"[110] he is giving his view that the question of the miraculous is of central importance for religion; only, he sees clearly that the importance attaches *not to the word*, but to the *ideas behind the word*. It is for this reason that we maintain the central significance of the question. Writers who maintain that the essential truth of religion is unaffected by our verdict on the miraculous are really claiming that our theology does not matter. While it is true that religion as personal spiritual experience exists irrespective of our view as to whether certain so-called miracles happened or not, it is not true that religion is unaffected by our conception of the miraculous. Religion must be thought about; in other words, a theology is a necessity. Thought cannot be divorced from feeling, or feeling from thought. So stalwart an exponent of "the religion of the spirit" as the late Auguste Sabatier maintained firmly this position. "Life comes before thought, religion before theology; but the labour of thought either enriches or impoverishes life, and theology either serves or compromises religion."[111] Hence the importance of a right philosophy of the miraculous. Our view of God and of Nature will be profoundly affected by our conclusion here; or, vice versa, our conception of Nature and of God will deeply influence our verdict on the miraculous. These conceptions do not hang loosely to the mind apart from our "religious experience." They are part of it. While our beliefs, our philosophy, in this case our view of the miraculous, do not constitute our "faith," they are yet inwrought within it. If by "faith" we apprehend God in the soul, it makes much difference to that experience as to the kind of God we conceive ourselves to be apprehending.

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[109] *The Position of the Liberal Theology*, p. 32.

[110] *Christianity and the New Idealism*, p. 36.

[111] *Religions of Authority and of the Spirit*, p. 337.

In later chapters these underlying and determining ideas will come up for discussion. Here it is well to note them. Such terms as "nature" and "law" will demand consideration. The attitudes of history, of science, of religion, and of philosophy to the question of miracle must be considered. And then, finally, an endeavour must be made to apply the principles adduced in the discussion to the Gospel "miracles," and to the "supernatural" Person of our Lord.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL SCIENCE AND MIRACLE

The first question that confronts us in the investigation is, What has happened in the past? What events can be ascertained as really having occurred? Now it is of the utmost importance clearly to understand that the question here is not, Have miracles happened? To put the question that way at this point is to lead again into inextricable confusions. For at once the question, What is a miracle, obtrudes itself, and our varying conceptions will largely determine our answer to the question, Did they happen? Such utterances as the following indicate the confusion that arises: "Miracle and historical study are inconsistent; and he who aims at history can never admit miracle."[1] Miracle being first conceived as an isolated event having no relation to its context is ruled out by historical science, whose task it is to trace the connections between events. "The idea of 'miracle,'" says Wendland, "must not be forced on either science or history."[2]

It is of the utmost importance therefore in considering the relation of historical criticism to our subject to claim that the discussion is not ruled out, before it begins, on *à priori* grounds. When we are told, as we repeatedly are, that scientific history cannot acknowledge miracle, it has to be clearly pointed out what the truth is in such statements. These utterances do not and cannot mean that historical science *à priori* rules out the possibility of any event, however remarkable. She is not justified in excluding from her investigations an alleged event in the past, on the ground that as far as our present knowledge goes, that event seems contrary to the order of nature. That would be unscientific dogmatism. Such utterances *do* mean that historical science, as a science, works on the necessary supposition that events are explicable, and that therefore for her to accept the old idea of miracle as an event "with no relation to the context either backwards or forwards" is for her to stultify herself. Even the most unusual and most extraordinary event she must investigate in the scientific faith that it is to be explained, and must resolutely maintain this faith in the face of those apologists for miracle who say that it is not to be explained.

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[1] Cf. Wendland, *op. cit.*, p. 219. (Zeller quoted.)

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 20.

The question then for historical criticism is not whether *miracles* happened, but whether the *events* recorded happened. As to whether these events may be called miracles, and in what sense we understand the term "miracle," that is a question outside the scope of history. *Event*, not *interpretative idea of event*, is the domain of historical science.

But how are we to ascertain what events have happened in the past? Through the labyrinth of records of extraordinary and unusual events alleged to have occurred how can we find any sure way to fact? Amid the voluminous accounts of incidents that claim to be "supernatural," on what sure principles can we go in order to separate fact from fiction, reality from myth? Have we any scientific winnowing instrument that will separate the wheat from the chaff?

This is the task which the comparatively recent study, called the "Science of History," or the "Science of Historical Criticism," seeks to accomplish. This endeavour impartially to investigate records of the past and to discriminate between the true and the false, fact and not-fact, is without doubt one of the characteristic studies of the age. It is a kind of corollary to natural science and takes its place alongside the older science. It has come into being with the growth of the scientific or truth-seeking temper.

At the outset it is of importance to note that many deny the term "science" to this study and, significantly enough, some who have devoted themselves most to its progress. Ernest Renan, who gave his life to historical researches, lamented at the end that this study in contrast with natural science led to no certain reality. "*Je fus entraîné vers les sciences historiques, petites sciences conjecturales qui se défont sans cesse après s'être faites, et qu'on négligera dans cent ans. . . . Le regret de ma vie est d'avoir choisi pour mes études un genre de recherches qui ne s'imposera jamais et restera* *toujours à l'état d'intéressantes considérations sur une réalité à jamais disparue.*"[3] Anatole France, who was always emphasizing the intense subjectivity of the historian, frequently maintained in similar vein that history is not a science. The historian always gives us the facts "cropped and pruned." The critic's own mental bias inevitably shows itself in his endeavour to reconstruct the past. A historical character or a historical narrative of events will be seen by two critics very differently. There is a considerable admixture of the historian's self in his record of past views and past events. Says Anatole France: "The sound critic is he who simply relates the adventures of his soul among masterpieces"; and again: "to be quite frank, the critic ought to say, 'Gentlemen, I am going to speak about myself apropos of Shakespeare, apropos of Racine, or of Pascal, or of Goethe.'"[4]

The question whether historical criticism is to be regarded as a science or not depends, however, entirely on the connotation given to the term "science." If science be regarded as that which is strictly observable and verifiable, then obviously historical criticism is not science. We cannot project ourselves backwards in time in order to observe precisely what happened. But on the other hand if we regard science as a method or spirit rather than as a compendium of observable and verifiable facts, historical criticism is making good its claim to be included. She endeavours with the most painstaking zeal to ascertain the fact-basis in the historical records of the past. Further, in this endeavour she utilizes as her guide the observations and verifications of strict science. What *now* happens is one clue to ascertain what *once* happened. The observed processes of the human mind today in recording events is another clue to reach that goal. On the one hand natural science tells her what now happens; on the other hand psychological science tells her how men come to make mistakes in recording what happens. With these two aids historical science seeks to trace the labyrinth of past records in order to arrive at fact. The only drawback to her methods and principles of investigation lies in the fact that science is never complete or final. There is ever "some new thing" to be observed. Estimates of "possibilities" and "impossibilities" continually need revising. In an infinite universe this is indeed inevitable. When therefore historical criticism utilizes the incomplete observations of science to determine the historicity or otherwise of recorded events, there is always the possibility that she may rule out as unhistorical that which science may yet declare to be in accord with observable facts. This is doubtless what M. Langlois had in mind when he said: "The progress of the direct sciences sometimes modifies the results of historical interpretations; a fact established by direct observation aids in the comprehension and criticism of documents." [5]

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[3] *Souvenirs*, etc., pp. 190–191. (Nelson ed.)

[4] See *La Vie Littéraire* (Eng. tr., 1st series), Preface.

These considerations reveal the difficulties of the task which historical criticism sets before itself, difficulties most manifest to those who have devoted themselves to the investigation. "The real events of the past" are to the historical critic, as the late Dr. Troeltsch said, "discoverable only as a reward of ceaseless toil, and then only with approximate accuracy." [6]

The *necessity* of the task of historical science, however, in spite of its difficulty, remains. If we had only to deal with *modern* historical records, the task would be simple, the necessity would not be urgent. For modern historical records are compiled according to the scientific principles of the age. The scrupulous desire to eliminate what is not clearly ascertained, the regard for exactitude of statement, these are characteristic of the historical temper of our time. Whether these aims are achieved is another question; the fact that different historians of the Great War, so recently over, do not always succeed in agreeing as to the facts themselves, apart altogether from their divergent interpretations of the facts, would seem to indicate that they by no means *are* achieved.[7] The personal factor so inevitably enters into historical records. But the point here to be stressed is that the desire scrupulously, impartially, and painstakingly to investigate the facts, to state "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth," belongs to the modern scientific temper and makes the task of historical criticism, in dealing with recent records, comparatively easy. No historical record of the war years, for example, will assert as fact such fictions, at one time popularly accepted, as that a Russian Army Corps was in England in 1914, though most will narrate it as a psychologically-instructive popular belief. The critic's task is thus made easy when he finds that modern historians strive conscientiously to distinguish between facts and what were popularly believed to be facts. When, however, he is dealing with ancient historical records a very different situation confronts him. The scientific spirit was then in large measure lacking. The present high regard for scrupulous exactness of statement was not manifest. The modern keenly-drawn distinction between fact and fiction did not exist.

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[5] *Intro. to the Study of History* (Eng. tr., 1898), pp. 207–08, by Langlois and Seignobos.

[6] *Christian Thought: Its History and Application* (1923), p. 6.

[7] Cf. the correspondence in *The Times* on "The Scrap of Paper" from May 27, 1924, onwards, as to whether the German Chancellor of 1914 ever used the famous "Scrap of Paper" phrase. "The historic utterance is not yet 10 years old. . . . And yet despite far-sighted historical precaution and notwithstanding evidence quoted from both speaker and hearer of the phrase, it is still possible to dispute whether it was spoken in English or in German, and, if in German, which of two forms it took. Well must the plain man wonder, if such things can be, where in historical record we may find indisputable certainty." (*Times*, June 12, 1924.)

History has sometimes been divided into three periods — Primitive, Ancient, and Modern. For the history of the earliest eras of human evolution we have little but primitive legends. The various records in different sacred literatures of the Creation of the World, of the Coming of Man, and of the Flood belong to this category.[8] The early history of separate nations belongs to the second period of history. Fact and legend are here mixed to a remarkable degree. In successive paragraphs of some of these "histories" we may have an obviously legendary narrative and a quite credible happening — both recorded as historical facts. *Modern* history brings us to the time when a scrupulous desire for exactitude of narrative began to manifest itself. It now comes to be seen that history is both science and art — the investigation of the facts being the field of science, their narrative in literary form the field of art[9] — and that whatever concessions the second may make to the first, the first must not make any concessions to the second.

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[8] Cf., *e.g., Folk Lore in the Old Testament*, J. G. Frazer. Vol. I, Part I.

[9] There is a certain amount of almost unavoidable ambiguity in speaking of "history," an ambiguity of which we have been conscious in writing this paragraph. It is caused by the twofold use of the term "history." Sometimes it refers to the *narrative* of past events, sometimes to the *events themselves*. When people speak of History in general, they use it in the second sense; when they refer to the history say, of Herodotus, of Livy, of J. R. Green, etc., they are using it in the former sense. This distinction must be borne in mind.

All this makes the task of historical criticism a very considerable one. The difficulty and delicacy of the task were well expressed over one hundred fifty years ago by Rousseau: "*Quelle justesse de critique m'est nécessaire pour distinguer les pièces authentiques des pièces supposées; pour comparer les objections aux réponses, les traductions aux originaux; pour juger de l'impartialité des témoins, de leur bon sens, de leurs lumières; pour savoir si l'on n'a rien supprimé, rien ajouté, rien transposé, changé, falsifié; pour lever les contradictions qui restent; pour juger quel poids doit avoir le silence des adversaires dans les faits allégués contre eux; si ces allégations leur ont été connues; s'ils en ont fait assez de cas pour daigner y répondre, si les livres étaient assez communs pour que les nôtres leur parvinssent; si nous avons été d'assez bonne foi pour donner cours aux leurs parmi nous, et pour y laisser leurs plus fortes objections telles qu'ils les avaient faites!*"[10] The *Vicaire Savoyard* might well have been staggered by the immensity of such a task. A like appreciation of the task of historical criticism would beget a more modest demeanour than is sometimes shown in regard to this work.

It is impossible here to do anything but mention in the briefest manner the various studies which demand consideration from the historical critic. First, there is the question of *the text.* The aim of the textual critic is to ascertain the original text. Before we can discuss events called miracles we must be sure as to exactly what was recorded by the original narrator. Should it be found, for example, that some extraordinary narrated event does not belong to the original text, but is a later interpolation, we have strong ground for refusing to accept the narrative as fact. Historical science can afford numerous illustrations of such "miracle" interpolations. To give but one: in the letter to the Smyrnaeans, giving an account of Polycarp's martyrdom, there is found the miracle story of a dove issuing from the wounded side of the martyr. In order to have a just appreciation of this narrative historical criticism can show that it is not necessary to believe that there was an *illusion* on the part of the observers.

[10] *Émile*, Vol. II, p. 76. (Nelson ed.)

Good grounds can be set forth for regarding the narrated incident as a later interpolation.[11] Next there is the question as to the *sources of the text.* Illustrations of this branch of historical criticism are seen in the *documentary* hypothesis of the origin of the Pentateuch, and in the investigation of what is known as the "Synoptic Problem." Before we can judge the value of a testimony we must know if possible its origin. There follows the study of the *interpretation to be placed on the records.* Did the author, we ask at this stage, *intend* his narrative to be taken literally? Without doubt it is of the utmost importance to ascertain, if we can, whether the author himself intended to record *facts.* To give but one illustration of this aspect of the investigation, the author, or authors, of the book of Job certainly did not mean us to take the statements in the prologue to the book as literal facts of history, and any arguments against the "statements of fact" found there are entirely beside the point. Again, when the book of Joshua speaks of "great stones" cast down from heaven upon the Canaanites we have to ask, What did the writer exactly mean? Without doubt, *not* literal stones, but hailstones (cf. Ecclesiasticus xlvi, v. 6, which so interprets the story).[12] Many extraordinary records, such as, for example, the story of Jonah and the "great fish," will be seen to come within a parabolic category. Further, having arrived at statements which the writer meant to be taken as facts, we come to the real difficulty of the task that confronts the historian in regard to "miracles." This final branch of historical criticism seeks to distinguish between what the writer *states* to be fact and what *is* fact. The question of the honesty and reliability of the author here arises. Regarding his honesty it is necessary to ask, Did he honestly himself believe what he was recounting, or has he sought to deceive? If it be decided that he was honestly seeking to state what he himself believed, the question arises, Can we accept his statements? One can be honest without being dependable. Ignorance is frequently sincere. Hence such questions as: Was he a victim of imposture? Was he credulous? Has he given *exact* accounts of what happened? Had he an

[11] Cf. Lightfoot's *Apostolic Fathers*, Part II, Vol. I, pp. 614 and 643.

[12] Joshua x, v. 11.

accurate mind? Or did he in any degree merit the judgment passed on a recent English historian, "constitutionally inaccurate."[13] Lastly, having arrived at a judgment as to what exactly happened, the final question remains, How is this event to be regarded? An event may have happened as narrated, while the interpretation placed upon it or deduced from it by the narrator may be inacceptable. There may, for example, be a sound historical kernel to the crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites, but this does not necessitate the view that it was due to a specific volition of the Supernatural interfering with secondary causes. There may, again, be historical truth in the statement that at the burning of Savonarola, there was for a time an arching of the fire round the martyr; but this again does not warrant us in accepting the judgment of the spectators who fell back in terror shouting, "A Miracle! A Miracle!"[14] The question raised by this last point is of the utmost importance if clarity of thought is to be maintained in this discussion, and while it is one which goes beyond the strict limits of historical inquiry, it is well to state it here. These, then, are some of the many questions that arise as the historical critic seeks to investigate the miracle records of the past.

It is of course impossible here to seek to apply these questions to all records of amazing happenings. Nor is it necessary. Later in the chapter we shall seek to point out the bearing of these questions on certain salient branches of history of significance to us in this matter. In the meantime we ask: Is it possible to clear the ground somewhat of these multitudinous questions and find some general principle that shall be our guide?

Now here we come to the great name of David Hume, who claimed to set forth such a principle. "I flatter myself," he said, "that I have discovered an argument . . . which, if just, will, with the wise and learned, be an everlasting check to all kinds of superstitious delusion, and, consequently, will be useful as long as the world endures. For so long, I presume, will the accounts of miracles and prodigies be found, in all history, sacred and profane."[15] When we ask what this argument is which will be of such inestimable value to us in historical criticism, we find that it comes to this: No testimony is adequate to prove that a miracle happened. Defining miracle as "a violation of the laws of Nature," he says: "as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, *from the very nature of the fact*, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined."[16] "There must . . . be a uniform experience against every miraculous event, *otherwise the event would not merit that appellation*."[17] "No testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind, that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavours to establish."[18] "No testimony for any kind of miracle has ever amounted to a probability, much less to a proof; and that even supposing it amounted to a proof, *it would be opposed by another proof derived from the very nature of the fact which it would endeavour to establish*."[19]

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[13] The reference is to J. A. Froude. Langlois and Seignobos speak of "Chronic inaccuracy or 'Froude's Disease'"! See *Intro. to the Study of History*, pp. 125–26, for a scathing indictment of this "disease." This volume is one of the soundest books in English on the general principles of historical criticism. The authors divide External Criticism into (1) textual criticism, (2) critical investigation of authorship, and (3) critical classification of Sources: and Internal Criticism into (1) interpretive criticism, (2) negative internal criticism of the good faith and accuracy of authors, and (3) the determination of particular facts.

[14] See *Savonarola and His Times*, Villari (Eng. tr., 1888), Vol. II, p. 407.

We have italicized the words which in our judgment reveal the inherent weakness of a position which, since Huxley's day, has received much merited criticism. It is obvious once again that a confused and confusing use of terms is at the bottom of the weakness of Hume's famous dissertation on miracles. It is this confusion which has occasioned and still occasions controversy in regard to his views. No book on this subject overlooks him. His arguments are repeatedly slain and as repeatedly come to life again. This is because, by his use of terms, confusion results as to his real argument.

The sentences we have quoted, which may fairly be maintained to give the general drift of his thought, reveal at once that his argument against recorded "miracles," seemingly based on grounds of testimony alone, is really based on a confused mixture of historico-critical and *à priori* views. Hume is trying to do at one and the same time and by one and the same argument two quite different things. On the one hand he is arguing against an *idea* — the violationist idea of miracles which he inherited and which he defined in the words already quoted. On the other hand he is arguing against the credibility of recorded *events*. These two endeavours he confused, and the same confusion has vitiated most subsequent discussions on "miracle." It is indeed possible to argue against the interventionist idea of miracle. It is likewise possible to argue against the historicity of recorded events. But the same type of argument will not avail in both cases, for the two issues are quite radically different. The time has surely come when these confusions should be strangled. Hume gives the impression, and the quite legitimate impression, that he is trying to argue on historical grounds against an *idea* of miracle. Such an attempt is inherently impossible, and is doomed to failure before it begins. One can argue against the historicity of recorded events, seeking to show on various quite legitimate grounds that they may never have happened. But one cannot argue validly on these same historico-critical grounds against the *possibility* of any event, however remarkable.

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[15] *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Open Court ed.), p. 115.

[16] P. 120.

[17] P. 120.

[18] P. 121.

[19] Pp. 133–34.

Hume's argument then, as stated in his confused and confusing way, is, Miracles are impossible. They are regarded as "violations" of law. Now the idea of "law," as understood by the scientist, in itself negates the idea of violation. Hence the argument of Hume, that "miracles are impossible," says nothing at all. It comes to this: "a conception that is scientifically inadmissible (viz., miracle) is impossible." That this is the argument is manifest from the words we have italicized. When he says, for example, "There must be a uniform experience against every miraculous event, otherwise the event would not merit that appellation," he really says, a "miracle" cannot possibly come within experience. Later on in his famous essay he makes this position of his quite clear. After referring to some unusual events (he calls them, let us be very careful to note, "miracles") wrought in France upon the tomb of the Abbé Paris, the famous

Jansenist, which events he acknowledges "were immediately proved upon the spot before judges of unquestioned integrity, attested by witnesses of credit and distinction, in a learned age, and on the most eminent theatre that is now in the world," he asks: "And what have we to oppose to such a cloud of witnesses, but the *absolute impossibility or miraculous nature of the events*, which they relate?"[20] In his *Life and Correspondence*[21] he gives expression to the same argument: "As finite added to finite never approaches a hair breadth nearer to infinite, so *a thing incredible in itself*, acquires not the smallest accession of probability by the accumulation of testimony." Historical science here seems to have been stultified by its own protagonist. It is no use investigating these events, Hume says in effect, for no matter how conclusive your arguments for their occurrence, they cannot be accepted. Further comment is needless. "Impossibility," not "incredibility," is the real argument. A "thing incredible in itself" is equivalent to an impossibility. We are driven from the field of history, where the battle purports to take place, to the realm of philosophy. Renan, who gave us a more modern version of Hume's position, exposed himself to the same criticism. He said, for example: "It is not in the name of this or that philosophy, but in the name of universal experience, that we banish miracle from history. We do not say 'miracles are impossible,' we say 'up to this time a miracle has never been proved.'"[22] In spite of himself, and seemingly with the best will in the world, Renan's attitude, which he regarded as merely historical, is *à priori*. For what does his use of the phrase "universal experience" involve? Nothing but the implicit denial of the possibility of the exceptional. Universal experience can only rule out the possibility of miracle, if miracle be conceived as in itself an impossible conception — such as, for example, a square-circle, a filled vacuum. And this merely drives us from event to interpretation of event, from fact to concept, and with the latter history has nothing to do.

Then why, it may well be asked, has Hume's argument continued as a very real force for nearly two hundred years?[23] If it is true, as much miracle apologetic has maintained, that his argument "counts for less than nothing,"[24] what might has it that it persists in spite of its impotence? The answer is, as we have already suggested, that there is another argument running alongside his *à priori* one, crossing and recrossing it till the two are almost hopelessly confused, but yet capable with patience of being traced. It amounts in substance to this, *the fallibility of human testimony.* Here we have a fact which cannot be questioned; there is therefore no cause for wonder that Hume's arguments persist. The fallibility of human testimony is specially manifest in the record of events which have a bearing on dogmatic beliefs. Testimony, in other words, is more to be depended upon when deep-seated instincts are not affected than when they are. The record of an event which seems to establish or support preconceived views grows, as all the world knows, with the rapidity and mystery of human thought. Hence it is that the value of evidence for wonderful events is sometimes in inverse ratio to its amount. "Historically the existence of the devil is much better proved than that of Pisistratus: there has not been preserved a single word of a contemporary of Pisistratus saying that he has seen him; thousands of 'ocular witnesses' declare that they have seen the devil; few historical facts have been established by so great a number of independent witnesses. However, we do not hesitate to reject the devil and to accept Pisistratus."[25] Messieurs Langlois and Seignobos have put the matter with precision, except for the last sentence quoted, where they seem to confuse rejecting a belief in the devil with rejecting the ocular evidence for his existence.

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[20] P. 131.

[21] Vol. I, p. 480.

[22] *Life of Jesus* (Eng. tr., cheap ed.), p. 29.

Human testimony, even first-hand testimony, further, is especially fallible if the events narrated were witnessed under the stress of violent emotion. It is sufficient to remember here that very many reported "miracles" took place in the midst of crowds swayed by intense enthusiasm. It is difficult to conceive circumstances less favourable to scientific observation. There are few observers even today who have sufficient scientific detachment to be able to isolate themselves when in a crowd from the "mob psychology" which paralyzes clear vision and thought. How much smaller a proportion of accurate observers must there have been in ages of general superstition and credulity!

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[23] The first ed. *Philosophical Essays concerning Human Understanding* was publ. 1748 (London).

[24] Cf. Ballard, *Christian Reality in Modern Life*, p. 432.

[25] *Introduction to the Study of History*, p. 207.

The argument of Hume, then, compels us to demand exceptionally good testimony to validate events of a marvellous character. Human testimony being universally admitted to be fallible the more extraordinary the event narrated, the more exacting must be the historical proofs for its occurrence. Without doubt it is such considerations as have created in large measure the scepticism to so-called miraculous events. Trustworthy evidence is the continual demand of the modern mind. Voltaire in the eighteenth century expressed this desire when he said: "*On souhaiterait, par exemple, pour qu'un miracle fût bien constaté, qu'il fût fait en présence de l'académie des sciences de Paris, ou de la société royale de Londres, et de la faculté de médicine.*"[26] Renan gave expression to the same thought when he wrote: "*Un miracle à Paris devant des savants compétents mettrait fin à tant de doutes.*"[27]

The abiding value of Hume's contribution is, then, not in his *à priori* rejection of alleged miraculous events. That attitude leads to the stultification of historical science itself. For it comes in effect, as already seen, to this: it is no use investigating events which are abnormal, events which general experience would not lead us to expect or predict. The abiding value of Hume's contribution lies in the fact that since his day we are much more exacting in our demands for evidence, and much more critical of the quality of the evidence adduced. Only in the sense explained can it be maintained that Hume's argument is without weight. In spite of all his confusions the substance of his objection remains. The modern mind is continually harking back to the fallibility of human testimony. M. Anatole France has preached that doctrine in many of his works. His incisive and satirical little story called *Putois*, for example, sets forth in the form of fiction the myth-loving, myth-creating faculty of man. Putois is an imaginary person whose actual existence comes to be believed in even by the people who originally conjured him up in their fertile imaginations.[28]

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[26] Art., "Miracles," in *Dictionnaire Philosophique.*

[27] Cf. *Les Apôtres,* Introduction.

Arising out of this critical regard for evidence the following principles may be set forth as having significance for the historical investigation of miracle stories: (1) The *date* of the record in relation to the events narrated has much bearing on the question of their historicity. It may even be set forth as a principle that the trustworthiness of evidence decreases as its distance in time from the events narrated increases. (2) The tendency of the human mind to be credulous towards accounts of "supernatural" happenings must be acknowledged. The myth-making and legend-loving faculty of man is a phenomenon which no critic of ancient records can ignore. Related to, and arising out of, this, is (3) the tendency to surround the life of any great figure of history with stories of his extraordinary powers. Max Müller attributed to this consideration great weight: "If Comparative Theology has taught us anything it has taught us that a belief in miracles, so far from being impossible, is almost inevitable and that it springs everywhere from the same source, a deep veneration felt by men, women, and children for the founders and teachers of their religion." [29] And related to, and arising out of, considerations (2) and (3), there is (4) the tendency to support cherished dogmas and beliefs with "supernatural" events that seem to substantiate them. It is such and kindred considerations, doubtless, which have led a recent writer to speak of "the general law that the miraculous grows with every fresh step which separates us from the original source." [30]

When we come now to apply these principles to records of so-called miraculous events, we have before us an almost inexhaustible field. Records of such events abound in all literatures. "The general tendency to believe in the marvellous," said M. Langlois, "has filled with miraculous facts the documents of nearly every people." [31] No student of the subject would have the temerity to disagree with this statement. "Miracles" are found in all times and among all religions.

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[28] See volume of short stories, *Crainquebille.*

[29] *Theosophy or Psychological Religion*, p. 24.

[30] G. G. Coulton in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, Vol. II, p. 454.

[31] *Introduction to the Study of History*, p. 207.

It is of course impossible to explore with detailed completeness here this fascinating documentary miracle-field. Nothing less than the whole world's literature would have to be ransacked for such a task. There are doubtless more books recording "miracles" than there are words in this treatise. Leaving the question of the miracles of the Gospel to a later chapter, something needs to be said here with regard to: (I) Miracle records in the non-Christian religions; (II) Old Testament miracles; and (III) Ecclesiastical miracles.

I. *Miracle records in the non-Christian religions.* Regarding these it is significant to note that Hume, in his famous essay already referred to, used the argument, often employed today, that the existence of miracle stories in all religions finally discredits those of the Christian religion. "Let us consider, that in matters of religion, whatever is different is contrary; and that it is impossible the religions of ancient Rome, of Turkey, of Siam, and of China, should all of them be established on any solid foundation. Every miracle, therefore, pretended to have been wrought in any of these religions (and all of them abound in miracles), as its direct scope is to establish the particular system to which it is attributed: so has it the same force, though more indirectly, to overflow every other system. In destroying a rival system, it likewise destroys the credit of those miracles, on which that system was established; so that all the prodigies of different religions are to be regarded as contrary facts, and the evidences of these prodigies, whether weak or strong, as opposite to each other."[32] And he somewhat naïvely concludes by saying that this argument "is not in reality different from the reasoning of a judge who supposes that the credit of two witnesses, maintaining a crime against any one, is destroyed by the testimony of two others who affirm him to have been two hundred leagues distant, at the same instant when the crime is said to have been committed." This argument is based upon two presuppositions, each of which we reject. (*a*) It is first of all based upon a conception of the relation between religions which no longer commends itself to us, nor is indeed defensible. That one religion is *true* does not mean that all other religions are *false*. The old distinction between *true* and *false* religions, which has been rendered inacceptable, invalidates Hume's argument here. (*b*) Further, his argument is based on the old notion of miracle as evidential, something to prove that which otherwise would not be known. The "miracles" of Christ from this point of view evidenced Him as divine. Now if Buddha, Muhammad, and others also performed miracles, they too would be evidenced as divine, a conclusion the very possibility of which Hume would reject, on his *true* and *false* distinction between religions. Both these mistaken views led Hume to conclude that the miracles of one religion cancel out the miracles of other religions. Again, an argument in no sense historical, but one based on presuppositions which we can no longer accept.

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[32] *Op. cit.*, pp. 127–28.

It must be clearly stated, then, that historical criticism has no right to rule out *à priori* the wonderful events recorded in other religions. The Christian apologist who rejects the validity of the *à priori* negation of Christian "miracles" must not himself fall into the same error by rejecting "miracles" in all other religions on similar grounds. The investigations of historical criticism on the principles adduced may well show that few of these are to be accepted as facts; but that is a very different matter.

When we come now to look at the multitudinous stories of wonderful happenings recorded in other religions, we find that for the most part the historical evidence for them is of little or no value. They are chiefly narratives dating centuries after the events they purport to record. This fact very largely discredits them. We may not conclusively say of them all, They did not happen. But in so far as they are records of events that do not come within the pale of our experience, and in so far as, on the principles adduced, they can be explained away, we are justified in an attitude of frank scepticism towards most of them.

The miracle stories attaching to the life of the Buddha come within this category. They are later legendary growths, at variance indeed with the earliest and most dependable records of his life and work. Max Müller saw in the Dhammapada an early protest on the part of the Buddha himself against the belief in miraculous powers.[33] The Buddha was indifferent to such

[33] S. B. E., Vol. 10, p. 64.

outward displays, and himself said, "I command my disciples not to work miracles but to hide their good deeds and show their sins."[34] Nevertheless the mass of legends grew rapidly. His birth[35] and death[36] especially became themes for "miraculous" embellishment. The familiar and beautiful legends of the four presaging signs associated with the Great Renunciation are doubtless the materialization of the yearnings and aspirations within Gautama's own mind. But most of the "miracles" recorded of him are of the most incredible kind. According to the Mahâvagga, he had the power to appear and disappear in supernatural fashion.[37] He outdid the magical practitioners of his own time, causing a stream of water to issue from one part of his body, flames of fire from another part, and in a moment reversing the process.[38] While others had to cross the Ganges by the slow method of boats and rafts, the Blessed One "vanished as quickly as a strong man might stretch his bent arm out, or draw back his outstretched arm, from this side of the river Ganges, and stood on the further bank with the company of the Bhikkhus."[39] On the Buddha's desire for water to drink, the foul and turbid stream becomes in a moment "clear and bright and free from all turbidity."[40] He can assure the invisibility of his disciples to achieve his own ends.[41] He has the power to make wood splitable and again unsplitable; the power now to make it impossible and then possible to light a fire, and now to make it impossible and then possible to extinguish a fire.[42] The Fo-Sho-Hing-Tsan-King tells us that to discomfit his critics he ascended up into the air while remaining seated.[43] And so the list of Buddha's marvels might be extended indefinitely. The main point to emphasize, however, is that these are the work of later tradition, and have to be regarded with Bigandet, Rhys Davids, R. W. Frazer, and others as "a fantastic web of legends, which find their source in the poetic and pious imagination of those who saw in all the deeds of the ascetic sage something more than human."[44]

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[34] Quoted by Max Müller, S. B. E., Vol. 10, p. 64, from Burnouf, *Introduction à l'Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien*, p. 170.

[35] See S. B. E., Vol. 19, pp. xix, 2–7, 13, 344–64; and Vol. 49, pp. 4–8.

[36] See S. B. E., Vol. 11, pp. 44, 86 f., 123 f., 128–30; and Vol. 19, pp. 268 f., 307 f.

[37] See S. B. E., Vol. 17, pp. 7, 9, 219; Vol. 11, p. 49.

[38] See *The Life or Legend of Gaudama*, Bigandet (3d ed., London, 1880, 2 vols.), Vol. I, p. 218 f.

[39] S. B. E., Vol. 17, p. 104. The same incident is recorded in *The Book of the Great Decease*, S. B. E., Vol. 11, p. 21. A similar miracle is recorded at S. B. E., Vol. 19, p. 251.

[40] S. B. E., Vol. 11, p. 74.

[41] S. B. E., Vol. 13, p. 105.

[42] S. B. E., Vol. 13, pp. 133–34.

[43] S. B. E., Vol. 19, p. 240.

In regard to the religions of China, the most noteworthy fact bearing on our subject is the indifference of the religious prophets of that country to the spiritual and the supernatural. This is especially noteworthy in the two great Chinese prophets, Confucius and Lao-tsze. "It is one of the most peculiar features of Chinese religion," it has been pithily said, "that it knows no revelation, no miracles, no divine interferences."[45] The popular craving for physical marvels, however, soon manifested itself after the death of these prophets. The speculative mysticism of Lao-tsze degenerated into the Taoism of later times with its magical beliefs and practices. Taoism has its miracle-working saints like other faiths. It has been said, for example, of Chang-Ling or Chang Tao-ling that "this saint is described as a miracle-worker of the highest order, as a distiller of elixir of life, as a first-rate exorcist, as a god-man who commanded spirits and gods. He personifies the transformation of Taoist ancient principle and doctrine into a religion with magic, priesthood, and pontificate, under the auspices of Lao-tsze himself, who, appearing to him, commissioned him to establish that great organization. In obedience to this patriarch, he transmitted his mission to his descendants, who reside to the present day, as legal heads of the Church, in the province of Kiangsi, in the same place in the Kwei-khi district where Chang-Ling prepared his elixir of life, and flew up to the azure sky."[46]

[44] *A Literary History of India*, R. W. Frazer, p. 121. I have not thought it necessary to give here a detailed examination of miracle in Indian religions, judging it sufficient to deal with miracle in the lives of the great historic founders of religions. The student may, however, be referred to the following work of L. de Milloué for an examination of miracle in Indian religion. *Conférences Faites au Musée Guimet* (Paris, 1907), pp. 119 ff., on "Le Miracle dans les Religions de l'Inde." He divides the miracles of India into three classes: (1) *Miracles mythiques*, (2) *Miracles rationnellement explicables*, and (3) *Miracles de pure Jonglerie* (*op. cit.*, p. 123).

[45] *History of Religion*, Menzies, p. 114.

[46] *Religion in China*, de Groot (New York, 1912), pp. 182–83.

So also is it with Zoroastrianism. In the earliest records, the Gathas, Zoroaster is revealed as a real man without any suggestion of miraculous power. There, as it has been said, "Except inspiration there are . . . no miracles."[47] Legend, however, became busy with him. Miracles were associated with his birth.[48] During his early years he was miraculously preserved from those who sought his death.[49] When Angra Mainyu, "the deadly, the Daêva of the Daêvas," commanded the Demons to slay him, Zoroaster was able miraculously to render unavailing their evil devices.[50] Such stories are foreign to the Gathas. "Let the Zendist," it has been well said, "study the Gathas well, and then let him turn to the Yasts or the Vendidad; he will go from the land of reality to the land of fable. He leaves in the one a toiling prophet, to meet in the other a phantastic demi-god. However ancient the fundamental ideas in the myths of the Yasts and Vendidad may be (and some of them were certainly older than the Gathas or the oldest Riks), in the forms in which they now stand, they are greatly later."[51] Prophecies of miraculous events are also found in the later books. A prophet is to be born, when "thirty winters of the tenth century are unelapsed," of a maiden "not before associated with men; nor afterwards, when she becomes pregnant has she done so before the time when she gives birth."[52] Miracles, such as the standing still of the sun, will be performed in future times, and these will ensure that "all the people of the world abide by the good religion of the Mazdayasnians."[53]

Similar legendary miracles are found in Muhammadanism. In the Quran, Muhammad never claims the power to work miracles. On the contrary, he seems to suggest that it was no part of his mission to perform signs and wonders. Surah XIII, for example, says (27 f.): "They who believe not say 'Unless a sign be sent down to him from his Lord'! Say: God truly will mislead whom He will, and will guide to Himself him who turneth to Him. . . . If there were a Quran by which the mountains could be set in motion, or the earth cleft, or the dead be made to speak . . .! But all sovereignty is in the hands of God." Again Surah XXIX (49) says: "They say, 'Unless a sign be sent down to him from his Lord.' Say: Signs are in the power of God alone. I am only a plain spoken warner." Likewise Surah XVII (92 ff.) has it: "And they say, 'By no means will we believe on thee till thou cause a fountain to gush forth for us from the earth, or until thou have a garden of palm trees and grapes, and thou cause forth-gushing rivers to gush forth in its midst; or thou make the heaven to fall on us.' . . . Say: Praise be to my Lord! Am I more than a man, an apostle? And what hindereth men from believing, when the guidance hath come to them, but that they say, 'Hath God sent a man as an apostle?'" [54] Nevertheless there are places in the Quran which Moslems believe record miracles: namely, in Surah III, 120, 121 (the assistance given at the Battle of Badr), in Surah XVII, 1 (the famous night journey), and in Surah LIV, 1, 2 (the clefting of the moon). In addition it is of course essential to Muhammadan belief that the Quran itself is a miracle in the most absolute sense. Further, grotesque stories of the most incredible kind were recorded in the later traditions: such as, for example, that trees miraculously moved to afford shade for the Prophet, that a wooden pillar, in consequence of the fact that Muhammad desisted from leaning against it, wept so severely as to rend itself in two. Many stories of the miraculous feeding of crowds of people from a very small quantity of provisions are also narrated.[55] Rodwell explains such stories in accord with the tendency "to support the purpose of contending factions" in early Muhammadanism, and "for the sake of expounding a dark and perplexing text." [56] Sir William Muir says, "Under the shelter of the civil arm and the fanatical credulity of the people, these marvellous legends grew up in perfect security from the attacks of doubt and of rational inquiry." [57] Nor were such incredibilities attached only to the founder of the religion. Muhammadan saints were held to perform the most astounding wonders. They could make the stars to fall and cut the moon in two, they could fly through the air, pass unharmed through fire, walk upon water, and transport themselves in a moment over great distances. A story similar to that of the mantle of Elijah in the hands of Elisha is found in Muhammadan literature. A saint of Tunis left his clothes in trust to his attendant, a native of Tripoli. The latter desired at first to sell them, but was advised to retain them by purchase, which he did. As soon as they became his property, a divine ecstasy seized him and he was endowed with miraculous powers.[58] The "Marabouts" of North Africa still are regarded as able to perform miracles. One of their principal functions, for example, is to make the rain to fall.[59] (Doutté, *op. cit.*, below p. 590.)

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[47] Cf. S. B. E., Vol. 31, p. xxvi.
[48] S. B. E., Vol. 47, pp. 17–33, 35, 122, 139–43.
[49] S. B. E., Vol. 47, pp. 36 ff., 145–51.
[50] S. B. E., Vol. 4, pp. 209–10.
[51] S. B. E., Vol. 31, p. xxvi.
[52] S. B. E., Vol. 47, pp. 105–6, 111, 115.
[53] S. B. E., Vol. 5, pp. 231 ff.

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[54] Rodwell's translation.

[55] See Hughes, *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 351.

[56] See Preface of his translation of the Quran.

[57] *The Life of Mahomet*, p. lvi.

There are also so-called pagan workers of miracles. Vespasian is said by Tacitus to have made a blind man see by anointing his eyes with spittle, and to have healed a diseased hand, "by the advice of the god Serapis"[60] Tacitus appends the note, "Persons actually present attest both facts, even now when nothing is to be gained by falsehood." Suetonius also narrates how Vespasian gave sight to this blind man and strength to another man's "feeble and lame leg."[61] Apollonius of Tyana, who lived during the first century of our era, is one of the most conspicuous examples of pagan miracle-workers. His life, as recorded by Philostratus, one hundred years or more after his death, recounts many extraordinary deeds. It is interesting to note that Eusebius, while rejecting many of these events, attributes others to the co-operation between Apollonius and evil demons; that is, he accepts them as events, while putting a certain interpretation of his own, and of most of his contemporaries, upon them. As to the exact fact basis of these stories, it is not possible to speak dogmatically. Evidence coming more than one hundred years after the events cannot be relied upon. Philostratus himself was doubtful about a story of the raising to life of a young girl which he recounts. "Was life extinct, or was it rekindled by Apollonius? That is a problem difficult to solve not only for me, but for the assistants themselves." Eusebius says of this case that the girl was not truly dead.[62] It is, however, difficult if not impossible to rule out all the stories of remarkable cures related of "the Pagan Christ" as inventions. That he effected cures it is unreasonable to doubt. It can hardly be credited that the one-time universal belief in "demonic miracles" had no substance in natural fact to account for its persistence.

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[58] See *Arabian Society in the Middle Ages*, E. W. Lane (London, 1883), p. 50.

[59] See *Arabian Society in the Middle Ages*, also *Les Saints de l'Islam*, Trumelet (Paris, 1881); also *Magie et Religion dans l'Afrique du Nord*, E. Doutté (Alger, 1909).

[60] Hist., Bk. 4, 81.

[61] *The History of Twelve Caesars*, Flavius Vespasianus Augustus, 7. The account reads, "It fortuned that a certain mean commoner stark-blind, another likewise with a feeble and lame leg, came both together unto him as he sat upon the tribunal, craving that help and remedy for their infirmities which had been shown unto them by Serapis in their dreams; that he should restore the one to his sight, if he did but spit into his eyes, and strengthen the other's leg, if he vouchsafed only to touch it with his heel. Now whereas he could hardly believe that the thing anyway would find success and speed accordingly, and therefore dost not so much as put it to the venture, at the last, through the persuasion of friends openly before the whole assembly he assayed both means, neither missed he of the effect." (Translation of Philemon Holland, 1606.)

In all these cases, however, the nearer our texts are to the events they narrate, the less prominent become the "miracle" stories. Historical criticism is justified therefore in being frankly sceptical towards them. When to the lack of evidence we add the considerations already referred to, no other attitude is possible. At the same time it must be said that historical criticism does not justify us in bringing down the lives of great prophets, such as the Buddha and Zoroaster, to the level in capacity for thought and action of the average or ordinary man. There are men uniquely endowed, who may be expected to do things beyond the achievement of the multitude. This is a consideration which we shall emphasize later. It must be remembered here, and so keep us from rejecting every unusual event in the lives of the great men of old. Even so, however, the historical records in the cases we have referred to are of such doubtful value, considered from the standpoint of the ordinary valuation of evidence, that we are not in a position to press this consideration at this point.

There are, however, records of extraordinary events occurring in connection with other religions and teachers, which have better claim for consideration. These are the accounts that come to us from nearly all peoples and religions of "miracles of healing." With these we deal in Chapter IV. Are all these stories, testifying to a similar type of happening, to be regarded as having no basis in fact? That to us, seems an impossible hypothesis. There is fact, there is historical event, behind so much record.

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[62] Note that "The Treatise of Eusebius" is translated in Vol. II in S. C. Conybeare's trans. of *Philostratus' Life of Apollonius.*

II. *Old Testament Miracles.* If we turn now to the narratives in the Old Testament of so-called "miraculous" events, we find for the most part that considerations of evidence will not allow us to maintain their precise historicity. Grounds other than those of history lead some apologists still to maintain them; but even these will be agreed that the evidence for them cannot afford any sound argument for their occurrence exactly as narrated. Those who seek to maintain the historicity of the "miracle" events recorded in the Old Testament do so, and this must be clearly stated, not on the grounds of historical evidence, but on *à priori* considerations. The substance of the position is that the Old Testament has a special place and value by virtue of its relation to the New Testament; it is viewed not in and by itself, but as the divinely-appointed preparation for the culminating revelation recorded in the New Testament. Such considerations, whatever doubtful value some may put upon them, do not arise at this stage of historical criticism. Here, let us repeat, we deal not with miracle, but with events, not with an interpretative idea held to explain events, but with the alleged events in and by themselves.

That this is the position may be illustrated from a modern writer who still tenaciously holds to Old Testament Miracles. Bishop Gore in his *Belief in God* says, "I am not at all disposed to 'give up' the claim for miracles in Old Testament history. The miracles of the Old Testament are mostly to be found in connection with the redemption of Israel from Egypt, and the foundation of their policy under Moses, or with the prophetic ministry of Elijah or Elisha. I think it is highly likely that these great movements in the history of redemption had really miraculous accompaniments. *But the conditions of evidence make the vindica-*

tion of this belief impossible."[63] (Italics ours.) We cite these words, not to call attention at this point to what we cannot but regard as a survival of a mistaken and still confused apologetic, but in order to let one who still holds to such an apologetic stress the point we have made — that evidential considerations forbid us to regard these Old Testament miracle stories as assured fact.

What then are these evidential considerations which in the case of the Old Testament preclude even conservative apologists for miracle from vindicating such narratives? Chiefly the *dates* of the records in relation to the events narrated. The critical theory, for example, of the composition of the Pentateuch, now so widely held, places a gap of at least three or four centuries between the events and the narrative as we have it today. This consideration will constrain impartial critics to seek to explain events, such as most will feel justified in calling with Wendland "unnatural" — as for example Aaron's rod which budded (Num. 18); the changing of the rod into a Serpent (Exodus 4); the speaking of Balaam's ass (Num. 22); the sun standing still (Joshua 10) — as being the products of an imaginative and wonder-loving age. In the history of Israel as in the early history of other peoples, we should expect legend or folk-lore. Nor will this expectation be disappointed. Some writers may be felt to overestimate the amount of folk-lore in the Bible.[64] But that is no valid reason for failing to note the presence of some. "These elements of tribal saga and legend cannot be ignored," says Wendland.[65] Nor should we seek uneasily to ignore them. There should be, as we hold, no reason for surprise in finding such in the Old Testament: surprise on the other hand ought to be caused by a failure to find them there. It is indeed a strange apologetic which continues to demand the necessary absence of elements from the Old Testament which are universal in the historical records of the world. Such an apologetic confers a position of "splendid" but unwholesome isolation to Old Testament history. Among other objections it involves the conception of a god who takes steps to prevent the legendary tendency of the human mind having its natural fruition in Palestine, but serenely indifferent to its manifestation elsewhere. Such an apologetic seems a very striking disservice to religion.

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[63] P. 248.

[64] Cf. *Folk Lore in the Old Testament*, J. G. Frazer; also *Essais de Folk-lore Biblique*, P. Saintyves.

[65] *Op. cit.*, p. 27.

The records of the prophetic ministries of Elijah and Elisha are nearer to the "miracle" events narrated of them than in the case of the Pentateuchal records; yet an interval of at least one hundred and fifty years elapses between event and record, an interval which forbids the conclusion that the remarkable events narrated of them can be relied upon as precisely historical. For manifestations in thought and act of their striking personalities one may indeed be prepared; and this will lead to the belief that there is some substance in fact for some of the remarkable stories related of them. But we shall at the same time remember those one hundred and fifty years for the highly probable imaginative enhancement of the events. In some cases, indeed, even conservative miracle apologetic will be very glad to have this interval. To illustrate: in the narrative of II Kings, 2:23, we read that some children had the temerity to shout after Elisha one day, "Go up, bald head; go up, bald head!" Then we read that for their offence Elisha cursed them in the name of the Lord, with the result that two she-bears came out of a wood and ate up forty-two of them. The moral and religious consciousness of every sincere follower of Him who said that "of such is the Kingdom of Heaven" repudiates with something of prophetic fervour such an idea as is here suggested by the narrative. Calmness and clarity of thought, however, will cool the antagonized spirit and will assist us to arrive at a just estimate of the incident. Two things have to be clearly distinguished: first, the question of fact; second, the interpretation to be placed on the fact. Was it a *fact* that these children met so untimely and so tragic an end? Probably there is behind this narrative some substance of "enigmatic" fact — such facts as confront every age when it witnesses the calamities of life. But there may well arise a doubt as to whether the coincidence suggested by the narrative is also fact — viz., that the children killed were the very children who had been guilty of so trivial, so amusing, and so eternally-typical an offence. Even, however, if that coincidence be historical fact, the suggestion that the tragic death of the children was a divine judgment for their temerity by no means follows. *Post hoc ergo propter hoc* has ever been the primitive philosophy of causation. And in the case before us to confused philosophy is conjoined a very primitive idea of God. Now, *all* would be loath to attribute these unworthy views to Elisha. Even conservative apologetic will therefore in this case welcome the one hundred and fifty or so years interval between event and record, for this interval may well free it from the necessity of attributing such views to the prophet.

As regards other stories of the Old Testament, often viewed as miraculous interventions, regard must be had for considerations to which we have already alluded. It was not *intended*, for example, that some stories should be taken literally. The *exact* habit of mind did not belong, as we have shown, to ancient history. The *literal* quality of mind, characteristic of the West, was not and is not, even now, conspicuous in the East. Now the Old Testament is both an ancient book and an Eastern book. When, for example, it is narrated (Exodus, 33 : 11) that "the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh with his friend," no one remembering these considerations will feel it necessary to believe that a physically audible voice was heard by Moses. Rather, in this vivid statement he will see a most natural and realistic way of describing the directness of the communion Moses had at Sinai with God. Likewise the story of the Burning Bush does not necessitate a literal burning. Mrs. Browning's interpretation is no doubt more in accord with what the first narrators of the story sought to declare:

> "Earth's crammed with Heaven,
> And every common bush aflame with God;
> But only he who sees takes off his shoes;
> The rest stand round and pluck blackberries."

Such an incident must be regarded as a poetically religious description, and not as a literal statement. It was inspired by the same poetic mentality which finds expression in many of the Psalms and of the Prophets. "The mountains skipped like rams, The little hills like young sheep" (Psalms, 114 : 4). "Let the floods clap their hands; Let the hills sing for joy together" (Psalms, 98:8). "All the trees of the fields shall clap their hands" (Isaiah, 55:12). Such language is frequently employed by even the most prosaic among ourselves. Yet we should be exceedingly surprised if after-centuries were to maintain, in consequence of our departing from prosaic literalness of utterance, that we were recording "miracles." Let us concede, for the purposes of illustration, that Macaulay's highly debatable dictum is true: "As civilization advances, poetry almost necessarily declines"; and that in, say, five thousand years, the habit of literal exactness of statement will be so engrained in humanity that no poetical or metaphorical descriptions will be possible to that enlightened age. In those future days, let us say, a letter containing the following utterance dated 1929 is discovered: "The sun *rose* this morning at 6.25." The sun rose! "A miracle," says our hypothetical age of rigid literalism. "In the twentieth century A.D., men still believed as primitive men believed!" Again, let us conjecture that the following statement dated 1929 is found by our imagined epoch: "The bushes in our garden have been ablaze for three months, and there are still no signs of their glory departing." Again, to that enlightened age, a "miracle," believed in by their credulous ancestors! Who has heard of a bush *blazing* for three months without being consumed?

Let us especially remember such possibilities in our estimation of Eastern narratives. Allied to the poetic faculty there is, in the case of the Jew, a predominantly religious nature. This instinct gives colour to his narratives, and in some cases determines the form of their statement. Coleridge nearly a century ago noted, "the habit, universal with the Hebrew doctors, of referring all excellent or extraordinary things to the great First Cause, without mention of the proximate and instrumental causes." [66] This habit is to be regarded as the expression of their religious genius and must not be viewed as a manifestation of scientific accuracy of statement. These considerations doubtless throw light on such incidents as the falling down of the walls of Jericho, the stars in their courses fighting against Sisera, the standing still of the sun at the prayer of Joshua, and many others.

[66] See *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, letter 2.

To conclude: while it is antecedently probable that the Old Testament, recording as it does the story of many pre-eminent personalities in a nation of pre-eminent insight and power, should contain accounts of events displaying unusual insight and potency, the evidence comes so long after the events that we are not entitled to build securely upon it. In regard to many incidents, such as the Elisha "miracles," we are compelled to regard them as legendary accretions to the record of striking historic personalities. In regard to other incidents, as for example, the restoration of the widow's son by Elijah (I Kings, 17), we are more inclined to believe that there is a historical fact-basis. Our judgment, however, as to the precise fact-basis is determined by our *à priori* judgment of what is possible and what impossible. And since this cannot be securely determined it is impossible to dogmatize as to the historical basis in fact for all the "miraculous" stories of the Old Testament. Suffice it to add, that in forming a judgment as to what happened we are more than loath to adopt as a guiding principle the view so often held in the past that these were events caused by a special divine volition setting aside the natural sequence of things in Israel's history, whether to prove the prophet's mission or to manifest special favour to some and signal vengeance to others.

III. *Ecclesiastical Miracles.* When we turn now to what are called ecclesiastical miracles, we are in a veritable jungle through which it seems impossible to find a way. Can any way be found that will lead to the clear ground of assured fact?

The Roman Church is much more assured that there is such a way than the Protestant Church. But that way, like Hume's method of rejection, is one built up of *à priori* considerations. The Roman Church says frankly that the way to approach this field is by way of "antecedent probability." Let that be established and the way is clear for the acceptance of these miracles. The Protestant Church, on the other hand, has been in large measure sceptical of this astounding field. Her attitude, also, has been in this limited sphere, like Hume's method in the whole sphere, based on *à priori* considerations. If the Roman Church has approached them by way of "antecedent probability," the

Protestant Church has approached them by way of "antecedent improbability." It seems well to point out here the respective confusions and fallacies in both the Roman Catholic and Protestant positions. The Roman Church seems to think that in substantiating a *fact* as having really occurred — such as for example numerous "healing miracles" — she has proved that they are "miracles" due to the intervention of some saint. But granted the fact, the hypothesis by no means follows. The Protestant Church, on the other hand, has adopted a general attitude of scepticism to all the alleged facts on the ground that she could not accept the Roman Catholic hypothesis as to their cause. But granted the questionable nature of the hypothesis the inhistoricity of the fact by no means follows. Augustine records the incident of a blind man being restored to sight in Milan while he himself was there.[67] Such was the antagonism of Protestant apologetic to the explanation accepted by Augustine — viz., that it was effected by virtue of the remains of the two martyrs Protasius and Gervasius — that the incident was summarily rejected as a fact. It was even regarded, not merely as *illusion*, but as "deliberate knavery," the work of those who "did not scruple to take upon themselves the contrivance and execution of the most degrading impostures."[68] Augustine was regarded as "one of the deceived."[69] It seems necessary to point out, on the one hand, to Roman writers who speak of "those who disbelieve in ecclesiastical miracles on principle"[70] that what these really disbelieve in on principle is not the fact but the hypothesis to explain the fact; and, on the other hand, to Protestant writers who emphasize the credulity of Roman writers, that the basal credulity they are attacking is not the acceptance of facts as historical but the acceptance of the Roman theory as to their cause.

In contrast with these attitudes, and while it must be acknowledged that the last word will frequently be dictated by other than historical views, the rights of historical criticism must be firmly maintained. Newman's *Essay on Ecclesiastical Miracles* may be taken as an illustration of the attitude which is too little regardful of critical considerations. One very candid critic spoke of "the mental and almost moral shock" he received from the book, and was so wrathful of its lack of critical regard for evidence that he referred to it as "that abomination of intellectual desolation."[71] Whatever attitude be taken to this outspoken judgment it at least bears testimony to the legitimate protest of historical criticism when its rights are not respected. Newman said that "in drawing out the argument on behalf of Ecclesiastical Miracles the main point to which attention must be paid is the proof of their antecedent probability. If that is established, the task is nearly accomplished."[72] No historical critic will agree to this "nearly accomplished." Newman, in spite of his superlative gifts in certain directions, was strangely lacking in the exact or scientific habit of mind. His subtlety of mind led at times to a complete failure to note common-sense considerations. We have always found it easy to understand why Huxley said that at the conclusion of reading some work of Newman he found it difficult to distinguish between truth and falsehood.[73] This disregard for evidential considerations may be seen as clearly as anywhere in his words on the "Assumption of Mary." After telling us that Mary died in private he goes on to say: "At length the rumour spread abroad that the Mother of God was no longer upon earth. Pilgrims went to and fro; they sought for her relics but they found them not; did she die at Ephesus? Or did she die at Jerusalem? Reports varied; but her tomb could not be pointed out, or if it was found it was open; and instead of her pure and fragrant body there was a growth of lilies from the earth which she had touched. So, inquirers went home marvelling, and waiting for further light. And then it was said, how that when her dissolution was at hand, and her soul was to pass in triumph before the Judgment Seat of her Son, the Apostles were suddenly gathered together in the place, even in the Holy City, to bear part in the joyful ceremonial; how that they buried her with fitting rites; how that the third day when they came to the tomb, they found it empty, and angelic choirs with their glad voices were heard singing day and night the glories of their risen Queen. But, however we feel towards the details of this history (nor is there anything in it which will be unwelcome or difficult to piety), so much cannot be doubted, from the consent of the whole Catholic world and the revelations made to holy souls, that, as is befitting, she is, soul and body, with her Son and God in heaven, and that we are enabled to celebrate, not only her death, but her Assumption." [74] From this it would seem that while Newman did not feel completely assured as to the story of the apostolic gathering to bury Mary, he yet regarded the Assumption of her body into heaven as fact. When we ask for the evidence for this astounding fact, we are merely pointed to "the consent of the whole Catholic world and the revelations made to holy souls." Without doubt, "the wish to believe," or what Newman would call "antecedent probability," settled the matter for him. Now, while it is clear to every sincere thinker that in regard to some miracle stories for which some evidence is forthcoming our judgment as to whether they happened or not is ultimately decided by what we conceive as possible and impossible, in regard to miracle stories for which the real evidence is practically nil there can be no doubt as to the judgment of the scientific historian. Criticism has its rights which cannot be lightly brushed aside by saying that having "proved" the "antecedent presumptions," the task is nearly accomplished.[75]

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[67] See *Confessions*, IX, 16 and *De civ. dei*, XXII, 8.

[68] Isaac Taylor's *Ancient Christianity and the Doctrines of the Oxford Tracts*, II, pp. 270–71. See pp. 242 ff. for Letter of Ambrose on "The unknown martyrs of Milan."

[69] Cf. footnote to p. 485, Vol. 2, of Marcus Dods' translation of *De civ. dei*, where Isaac Taylor is cited.

[70] Thus Father Ronald Knox in *The Miracles of King Henry VI* (1923), Introduction, p. 28.

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[71] *Philomythus*, 2nd ed., p. v, lxvii, E. A. Abbott.

[72] P. 190.

[73] See *Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley* by his son, Vol. II, p. 225.

[74] *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*, 6th ed. (1881), pp. 377–78. For a very adequate account of the growth of the legend of the Assumption through the successive stages of her *Transitus* or *Dormitio* and her *Assumptio*, see Chap. 20 of *The Sacred Shrine*, by Yrjö Hirn and the authorities there cited. See also for the uncritical Roman point of view *The Blessed Virgin in the Fathers of the First Six Centuries*, T. Livius (1893), Chap. 9.

[75] It is to be noted that the Roman Church herself has not defined the Assumption as a dogma. While on the one hand she asserts that "*l'assomption est une vérité à tout le moins certaine, et qui ne pourrait être niée sans la plus usigne témérité, puisque l'Eglise l'enseigne infailliblement par son magistère ordinaire*," on the other hand she says, "*il ne s'ensuit pas qu'on puisse la ranger actuellement parmi les vérités de foi*

In very many cases the evidence for ecclesiastical miracles is found on critical investigation to be of the very slightest value. The records as we have them date frequently from considerable periods after the events narrated. Such a fact makes it manifest that other considerations, such as those previously referred to, will "explain" many of such stories. They are without doubt in the majority of cases the product of a credulous age. They are interesting, not so much to the scientific historian who seeks to record *facts*, as to the psychologist who seeks to trace mental processes. They are a record of the opinions and thoughts of an age that delighted in marvels. They reveal the mental bias of the times. The desire to believe very often explains the rise of the belief. The wish is so often father to the thought. There is abundant truth in the contention that as regards ecclesiastical miracles, the supply meets the demand.[76] When people cease to expect, they cease frequently to find. The reason which Matthew Arnold gave for so many in his day "turning away" from miracles is certainly justifiable in regard to many of these miracles. The human mind, he said, "sees as its experience widens, how they arise. It sees that under certain circumstances they always do arise." [77] Every student of hagiographic texts is familiar with the fact that from very early centuries miracle stories were attached to the saints with the most uncritical facility. Catholic and Protestant writers alike acknowledge what has been recently described as "their manufacture on the largest scale." [78] The great Bollandist work, begun in the early seventeenth century, known as the *Acta Sanctorum*, is a veritable storehouse of such legendary creations, and recent Bollandists, such as C. de Smedt [79] and H. Delehaye,[80] working in accord with critico-historical methods, acknowledge freely its presence.[81]

. . *car le magistère ordinaire de l'Eglise ne s'est jamais prononcée sur son origine, et ne l'a jamais présentée comme faisant partie du dépôt de la révélation*" (Article, "*Assomption de la Sainte Vierge*," Vacant, Vol. I, p. 2139).

[76] Cf. Brewer, *Dictionary of Miracles* (1884), p. xiii.

[77] *Literature and Dogma*, p. 129.

[78] Cf. Bishop Gore's *Belief in God*, p. 248.

[79] Cf. his *Principes de la Critique Historique* (Liège, 1883).

[80] Cf. his *Légendes Hagiographiques* (1905), also his *Les Légendes Grecques des Saints Militaires* (Paris, 1909).

[81] Cf. *Analecta Bollandiana*, a Quarterly Review begun in 1882 (Bruxelles and

This "manufacture," if we may so speak of it, was governed and inspired, consciously or unconsciously, by two of the considerations already referred to. First, the desire to give glory to some saint or martyr. Second, the desire to find support for certain dogmas.

The first of these considerations has already been noted in the sphere of the comparative study of religions; it is even more abundantly evident here. The remarkable series of miracles attributed to the Virgin Mary is one very noteworthy historical relic of this tendency of the human mind to give a "miraculous" halo to the saints. The translations of Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, from Ethiopic manuscripts in the British Museum, published under the title *One hundred and ten miracles of our Lady Mary* (Medici Society, 1923), may be referred to the notice of the English student, as also the same learned author's *Legends of our Lady the Perpetual Virgin and her Mother Hanna* (Medici Society, 1922), also translated from Ethiopic MSS.[82] Throughout the Middle Ages, in most European countries there were extensive collections of the Miracles of the Virgin. Pious tales of her miraculous powers were in those days "current coin," the creation doubtless of the desire to confirm the popular faith in her.[83]

The striking book of M. Delehaye, the Bollandist, may also be referred to the notice of those who wish to see the thesis of these paragraphs established: "*Les Légendes Hagiographiques*" (English translation, *Legends of the Saints* (1907)). There is in hagiographical literature, as M. Delehaye reminds us, very much material of inferior quality mixed with some that is excellent, tares in a disconcerting proportion found sometimes intermingled with the good grain.[84]

Paris). For the history of the Bollandist's great work see *A travers trois siècles: L'Œuvre des Bollandistes* (1615–1915), Bruxelles, 1919, by H. Delehaye.

[82] For further miracle legends of Mary see *The History of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, etc., the Syriac Texts with Eng. tr. by E. A. Wallis Budge (Luzac's *Semitic Texts and Translation Series*, 1899). For Ethiopic hagiographic legends, see also the two large volumes privately printed for Lady Meux: *The Life of Takla Hâymânôt, The Miracles of Takla Hâymânôt* and *The Book of the Riches of Kings* (Ethiopic texts trans. by E. A. Wallis Budge, London, 1906).

[83] See *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English*, 1050–1400, J. E. Wells, Yale Univ. Press (1916), pp. 164 ff., pp. 788 f.

[84] Eng. tr., Preface, p. ix.

It is significant to note that both the Eastern Church and the Roman Church still require that every candidate for canonization must have accomplished some "miracles." In regard to the Eastern Church, the ordinary base of all canonization is miracle.[85] In regard to the Roman Church "three well-authenticated miracles" are required before formal canonization is decreed.[86] These miracles are held to prove that the saint to be canonized has in the heavenly realm special power and special felicity. "*Ces miracles, accomplis après leur trépas, montrent que ces amis de Dieu sont plus puissants et qu'ils vivent d'une vie bien plus heureuse que ceux qui sont encore ici-bas.*" [87] The recent case of the canonization of Jeanne d'Arc sheds much light on this point. The Roman Church has discovered and "proved" that certain women were cured by the intervention of Jeanne, one suffering from an ulcer of the leg, another from an ulcer of the stomach, a third from a "*mal perforant plantaire.*" This discovery having been made, and the "proof" having been assured, the way was open to Pope Benedict XV to proclaim her a saint and worthy to be invoked. Most Protestants in this regard will agree with the view well expressed by M. Joseph Fabre, one of the soundest historians of Jeanne. "*Qu'on ait allegué longuement, à l'appui de la béatification, les miracles récemment opérés par Jeanne d'Arc sur trois religieuses guéries d'une ostéoperiostite et d'ulcèrs au sein et qu'on ait laissé dans l'ombre son vrai miracle, le salut de la France: cela choque assurément.*" [88] Further, it is impossible for the impartial historian to resist the conviction that the desire of the French Catholic world for the canonization of Jeanne was one of the chief causes of the "healing miracles" held to have been achieved through her intervention. One need not throw doubt on the healings themselves when refusing to admit that their

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[85] See the very full article "*Canonisation dans l'Église Russe*" in Vacant's great work (in process) *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique* and the Russian authorities there cited.

[86] Cf. *Essays and Addresses in the Philosophy of Religion* (1st Series), von Hügel, p. 18. See article "*Beatification and Canonization*" in the *Catholic Ency.* and especially the comprehensive article "*Canonisation dans l'Église Romaine*" in Vacant.

[87] See Vacant, *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, tom. 2, p. 1643.

[88] See *Procès de Réhabilitation de Jeanne d'Arc*, 2 vols., Joseph Fabre (Paris, 1913), Vol. II, p. 410.

"cause" was that maintained by those who sought her canonization. It is sufficient for our purpose here to note in modern times the tendency revealed by all hagiographical literature — the desire to give glory to the saints and martyrs by attributing to them miraculous interventions. The facility with which theories are accommodated to the popular wish could receive no better illustration than in the case of that heroic maid. During her trial the Faculty of Theology at Paris held that her "Revelations" and "Apparitions" had proceeded *not* from the three saints Jeanne thought — St. Michael, St. Catherine, and St. Margaret — but from the three evil spirits — Belial, Satan, and Behemeth.[89] Today there are few among the "faithful" to question the angelic authenticity of her remarkable experiences.[90]

The *second* of these considerations was briefly noted in the case of Muhammadanism: it is much more abundantly evident here. An incident like the sudden death of Arius, the day before he was to have been received into the Church, on the command of Constantine, was interpreted on one side as a divine interference to safeguard the doctrinal purity of the Church. A dogma like that of the Immaculate Conception, which has no foundation in Scripture or in early Apostolic tradition, was and is held by the Roman Church to have been verified by many miracles wrought on its behalf. By the middle of the nineteenth century these miracles had convinced a great number of the faithful, almost the whole body of the clergy, and had even won over the Dominicans. "The Pope judged that the hour had arrived to define the new dogma and in December, 1854, the *Bull Ineffabilis* proclaimed it in the face of the whole world." [91]

Against these miracles accepted by the Roman Church in favour of a dogma it proclaims, may be set a series of miracles rejected by the Church in consequence of the fact that they favoured the Jansenist movement.[92] Impartial critics, when they note the alacrity with which miracles are accepted which support dogma, and a corresponding alacrity with which miracles are rejected which assail dogma, will be doubly suspicious. When dogmatic passions and interests are aroused, the critical faculty disappears.[93] This may be evidenced from the case of so acute a thinker as Pascal. Even his clear mind was not proof against dogmatic presuppositions in regard to ecclesiastical miracles which no historical critic would now accept. He held that "miracles distinguish in doubtful cases: between Jews and Pagans, Jews and Christians, Catholics and Heretics, the calumniated and calumniators, and between the three crosses."[94] The reference in the last case he mentions is to the miracles said to have been wrought on the discovery of the crosses of Christ and the two malefactors by Queen Helena. In order to ascertain which of the three was the cross on which Christ had hung, the expedient was adopted of placing a person recently deceased upon each in turn. Nothing resulted from putting the body upon two of the crosses, but on its being placed on the third the deceased was instantly restored to life.[95]

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[89] Cf. *The Life of Joan of Arc*, Anatole France (Eng. tr., 2 vols., New York, 1909), Vol. II, p. 296.

[90] The English world may yet live to see the canonization of one of its own kings — Henry VI. This, we are told, is one of the fond dreams of many Roman mediaevalists. The recent publication of the volume already referred to — *The Miracles of King Henry VI* — may be the means of meeting *one* of the requirements of the case!

[91] Cf. Saintyves, *Le Discernement* etc., p. 331.

[92] Cf. Saintyves, pp. 337–46.

We have spoken of the "manufacture" of these stories, but it must be carefully noted that it is not suggested that they are a mass of consciously fabricated lies. For that reason the word needs emendation. These stories, for the most part, were evolved, rather than consciously and volitionally created. Historical criticism does not attribute their existence to a lie; it attributes it to a growth. As an illustration of this attitude at work on ecclesiastical miracles, we may refer to a series of critical studies in French edited by Paul Sabatier, *Opuscules de Critique Historique* (Paris, 1901 *et seq.*). In the volume, *L'évolution et la développement du merveilleux dans les légendes de S. Antoine de Padoue,*[96] we have a most instructive illustration of the application of the method to a well-known saint. M. de Kerval tells us that with regard to the miraculous stories that have gathered round St. Antony of Padua "*nous sommes en présence d'un phénomène d'evolution et de processus parfaitement normal et dont il n'est pas impossible, dans une certaine mesure, de découvrir les lois et de saisir les modes.*" [97] He shows how in the primitive documents of "*La littérature antonienne*" there are "*fort peu d'épisodes miraculeux*"; but that in the later tradition (from the fourteenth century) "*les épisodes extraordinaires, les prodiges de toute sorte y abondent. C'est toute une profusion, toute une effloraison de mirabilia qui a surgi.*" [98] He traces the growth of the stories, showing how (I) in some cases facts of natural origin become transformed into unnatural events under the influence of legend; (II) in other cases legend, finding the marvellous already existing, accentuates and amplifies it; (III) in others is seen "*la multiplication des épisodes par dé-doublement,*" and (IV) in others are found the same episodes attributed to different saints. M. Delehaye, likewise, lays emphasis on the *development* of hagiographic legends. Many of them have a history whose origins are concealed in myth and folk-lore. The same stories are found among different races and in different lands. This leads to the conclusion that "they have spread themselves over the world from a common stock." Numerous illustrations are cited. "The Irish have thought fit to borrow from King Midas his asses' ears, with which to adorn at least two of their kings." Referring to the legend of the body of the martyr Bacchus flung on to the highway and protected from dogs by birds of prey, he points out that a similar miraculous protection was accorded to the remains of St. Vincent, St. Vitus, St. Florian, and St. Stanilaus of Cracow; "while we must not omit the eagles summoned by Solomon to watch over the body of David, or other similar narratives drawn from Talmudic literature." Referring to the figure of Christ in the Church of San Salvador, which drifted miraculously up stream to its divinely appointed place, he says, "In a similar strain Pausanias describes the coming of the statue of Hercules to Erythrae." Legends which tell of holy pictures shedding tears, statues bathed in perspiration and speaking forth from their marble lips were found among the ancients. "The swarm of bees that alighted on the cradle of St. Ambrose and which also visited St. Isodore had long before deposited its honey in the mouth of Pindar and in that of Plato. The miracle of the rock opening to receive St. Thecla and St. Ariadne, in order to snatch them from the pursuit of their persecutors, is but an echo of the fable of Daphne, just as the story of St. Barbara recalls that of Danaë confined by her father in a brazen tower." [99] M. Pierre Saintyves has likewise in numerous volumes emphasized the evolution of hagiographic legends. In *Les Saints Successeurs des Dieux*, for example, he devotes a chapter to "La Migration des Miracles." [100]

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[93] See *Le Miracle et ses Contrefaçons*, De Bonniot (Paris, 1887), Part II, Chap. 4. "*Les miracles des Hérétiques*," where the orthodox Roman standpoint is set forth. An interesting illustration of the mentality which *expects* miracles in support of dogma is seen also in a footnote of Newman's. Replying to a sceptical writer who, referring to the rejection by an orthodox writer of certain miracles of Theophilus, an Arian missionary, had said that "If they had been reported concerning Athanasius, all difficulties would have been smoothed over and accounted of small moment," Newman appends this *revealing* note: "as if a miracle wrought by Athanasius was not more likely than miracles wrought by an Arian, though a missionary!"

[94] *Pensées sur les Miracles.*

[95] The account is found in Sulpitius Severus, *Hist. Sacr.*, Lib. 2, Cap. 34; also in Sozomen, *Hist. Eccl.*, Lib. 2, Cap. 1. W. Moeller, in *History of the Christian Church* (Eng. ed.), Vol. I, p. 506 (footnote), gives additional sources for this "miracle."

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[96] By Léon de Kerval (1906). Cf. also the French series of critical studies, *Collection d'Études et de Documents sur l'histoire religieuse et littéraire du Moyen Âge* (Paris, Librairie Fischbacher, 1898 *et seq.*).

[97] P. 223.

[98] P. 221.

It is not always an easy question, however, to decide in specific cases as to whether miracle legends really "migrated" from one people to another, or whether they may not rather have arisen from common psychological needs and instincts. This latter is the view, for example, of Professor Yrjö Hirn, who after saying that "in all parts of the world, among primitive and barbaric tribes, legends of heroes, kings, and medicine-men are found corresponding in essentials with the Christian traditions," goes on to add: "nor is there any need to suppose that these legends were borrowed by one nation from another. The conditions of the correspondence are to be found most easily in the psychology of primitive and barbaric man or, more correctly, in the psychology of that mental life which lives on continuously, as something primitive or barbaric, among civilized mankind." [101] Doubtless, however, both these explanations are necessary to account for the presence of similar miracle-legends in all parts of the world. They need not be conceived as alternative, but rather as complemental hypotheses.

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[99] Cf. the whole of Chap. II, Delehaye, *op. cit.*

[100] Cf. also *Les Reliques et les Images légendaires* by the same author. Reference may also be made to E. A. Abbott's *St. Thomas of Canterbury* (2 vols., 1898), for the "growth" of miracles.

[101] *The Sacred Shrine* — a study of the poetry and art of the Catholic Church (1912), p. 32.

This emphasis on the *evolution* of many of such stories postulates, it must also be remembered, some substance of fact from which the evolution began. Even the theory of the evolution of species does not at present take us beyond a primitive life cell. There must be something to begin with. It seems, therefore, necessary to point out that it is in the highest degree probable that there is some basis in actual fact for at least some of the wonderful events recorded. The task of historical criticism is to tell us, if it can, what were these original facts which tradition has so marvellously embellished. That there were some unusual events behind them few will be inclined to deny. While the evidence for the majority is of the slightest value, some rest on evidence which is exceedingly strong. The stories Hume refers to, which he acknowledges were so weightily attested, may be instanced. Scepticism here is a case of criticism over-reaching itself. There may be very good testimony for unusual events, and while these have to be closely investigated by historical science, they cannot all be arbitrarily rejected. Historical criticism today, for example, is by no means averse to accepting the very events which Hume refers to — the cures upon the tomb of Abbé Paris, the famous Jansenist — and which he, in spite of their being "immediately proved upon the spot, before judges of unquestioned integrity, attested by witnesses of credit and distinction, in a learned age and in the most eminent theatre that is now in the world," rejected so summarily.[102] Likewise Gibbon's scepticism to the so-called "miraculous powers of the primitive Church," his famous third cause of the rapid growth of the Christian Church, is no longer valid. For similar happenings have occurred through all the centuries and occur today. The fact that the evidence is not good in many instances will not now lead historical science arbitrarily to reject them, since it is manifest today that such events can and do happen. It is, further, a common-sense maxim that much smoke presupposes a fire. While this consideration must not be pressed too far, it certainly has bearing on what have been called "miracles of healing." These, discussed at greater length in Chapter IV, coming from all ages and associated with all religions, have substance of fact behind them.

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[102] An account of such "miracles" can be found by those interested in *Recueil des Miracles Opérés au Tombeau de M. de Paris Diacre* (2 vols., Autrecht, 1733).

One further consideration must be referred to here, which historical science ought to bear in mind, namely, *personality*, and which leads, like the idea of evolution, to the belief that there is substance in fact behind some of these stories. Common sense distinguishes between the capacities of different individuals, and argues securely as to the possibilities and impossibilities of these individuals on these differences. If we are told that a friend whom we know to be of very frail physique and suffering from acute organic heart disease had during a rest in Switzerland climbed the Matterhorn, we should immediately reject the story. If, on the other hand, we are informed that a very robust companion of our friend had performed this feat, we should see no reason for scepticism and should accept the story without demur.

Now historical criticism must apply this consideration to the investigation of the fact-basis of remarkable happenings narrated of "the famous ones of old." History, as Renan said, is not a simple game of abstraction; it is an affair of men.[103] And men differ in all kinds of ways. A person endowed with that fullness of physical and mental vitality which characterizes what are popularly called "magnetic personalities," is capable of performing what the journalist would call "miracles of endeavour." His presence also communicates a quickening impulse to all around him. Those who are with him feel "more alive," and will envisage tasks as possible which in their usual moments they would regard as for them impossible. Such facts, with which all must be familiar, throw light upon the miracle narratives of the saints and heroes of old. On the one hand the fact of their vitalizing influence upon their associates would lead these by a natural and almost inevitable process of mind to magnify the capacities of their heroes. On the other hand the very fact of their high capacities in thought and deed would lead us today to conclude that these imaginative growths did not spring from nothing.

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[103] *Life of Jesus*, Introduction. "Causality" is, for historical science, it is well for her to remember, as Troeltsch well said, "almost entirely a matter of *psychological motivation*" (Article, "Historiography," in *Ency. of Religion and Ethics*, p. 719).

Historical criticism must beware therefore of arguing about possibilities as if they were abstract entities in themselves. Possibilities are things possible to men. The differences in capacity are revealed not only in the case of different individuals in any one age: they are even more clearly seen when we have regard to the history of all ages. The history of mankind affords no ground for the belief in abstract unchangeable entities known as possibilities and impossibilities. Even today the capacity of the aborigine of Australia is very far short of the capacity of the civilized European. Many things to him impossible are to us possible. We have developed capacities within ourselves which are still dormant in him. Not only have we mechanical inventions which awaken his naïve and astonished wonderment; not only do we utilize forces as old as Nature to accomplish what to him are undreamed-of possibilities; not only do we prophesy with scientific precision the time when the sun's or the moon's light shall be hidden, and are slowly learning even to date with approximate accuracy forthcoming earthquakes: but even in these days we are exploring that deeper mystery which we call our *self*, and are finding in it suggestions of potency which our own fathers would have called, according to their mentality, either "supernatural" or "fictitious." Now, undeveloped man's limited and restricted capacities might well cause him to argue that what he cannot do we cannot do. That primitive man does argue in this way is obvious from the fact that whenever he sees something happen which he cannot do, he regards it as a miracle, in the sense of a supernatural intrusion. Achievements natural to us are regarded by him as supernatural. Let the historical critic beware of falling into an error similar to that of primitive man — arguing that what *we* cannot do, no one ever could or ever will be able to do. Differences in human capacity predispose us to expect that things impossible to some may be possible to others of greater insight, development, and potency.

How far the range of possibility for human personality extends is of course the question. And it is not a question historical criticism can settle. It is, however, at least open to this science to allow that there may be events of the past, regarded by some as *contra naturam* and so rejected, which are yet not impossible to a personality of sufficient development or enlightenment. Into this question we shall enter more fully in a later chapter.

Enough, however, has been said to show that historical criticism has its considerable limitations in dealing with this question. "With regard to historical criticism," said Auguste Sabatier, "I maintain that its rights are illimitable, but that its power is not."[104] Every candid historical critic will acknowledge the justice of this remark. The *final* word on this matter does not rest with criticism. When this science has done its best, or its worst, there is left a considerable field in which an assured historical judgment cannot yet be given. Here we have to acknowledge with gratitude the service of historical science in clearing out of the way many of the extravagant stories of the past. Yet a residue remains, which the impartial historical critic will confess he rejects or accepts on grounds which are not quite stable or secure.

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[104] *Religions of Authority and of the Spirit,* p. 270.

CHAPTER III

NATURAL SCIENCE AND MIRACLE

It can hardly be doubted that the present condition of uncertainty in regard to miracle has been chiefly brought about by the progress of natural science. To this same progress is due what a recent Gifford Lecturer has more trenchantly described as "the decay of the belief in miracles."[1] This development, which must ever be regarded as one of the crowning glories of the last century, brought with it, and was itself the expression of, a temper of mind critical of, if not indeed hostile to, miracles in the old sense of evidential and inexplicable interventions of the supernatural into the realm of the natural. The manifestation of this temper in the study known as historical science has been considered in the last chapter. There it was seen how critical considerations compel us to banish from the realm of fact many of the so-called miraculous events recorded in history. At the same time the *limitations* of historical science in this field were noted, and an endeavour made to show that there are cases where considerations of evidence are not adequate for the acceptance or rejection of certain narrated events. In this chapter we shall seek to ascertain what science, used in the generic sense, has to say on this question: whether and in what sense its hostility to miracle is justified, and whether it itself is competent to say the final word on the matter.

Such a critical examination of the functions and affirmations of science in regard to this question is necessary. Confused and confusing utterances have been made on behalf of science which demand examination and elucidation. When for example it is said "that in the world accessible to man's experience no supernatural fact takes place, is a truth which imposes itself more and more on the conscience of mankind,"[2] the candid critic will desire at once to know what is meant here by "supernatural fact." He will find that it is conceived as a violation of natural law. This violation being to the scientist an impossible conception, the utterance will be seen in its own perspective. That perspective is purely scientific: through it is envisaged a descriptive formulation of things and not an interpretative conception of things. Now the phrase "supernatural fact" is confusing in this connection. It involves an appropriation of the term "supernatural" to the scientific sphere where its content of meaning is repudiated. This appropriation the religious consciousness must definitely and unhesitatingly challenge. It is true that the term "supernatural" by its very composition (*super* and *natural*) seems a challenge thrown in the very face of science: it suggests to her that here is event which is incapable of scientific scrutiny and formulation. But that is not, as we hold, the *essential* significance of the term. "Supernatural" has, rightly understood, a religious reference and not a scientific, though it has to be frankly confessed that theology itself has often in the past refused the delimitation which this assertion involves. The religious philosopher has just as adequate ground for saying, "that in the world accessible to man's experience supernatural fact is continually taking place, is a truth which more and more imposes itself on the conscience of mankind." All this, however, but shows that the term "supernatural" is as pregnant with ambiguities and confusions as the term "miraculous."

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[1] *The Domain of Natural Science*, E. W. Hobson, p. 490.

Again, when it is said, as it very frequently is, that science cannot admit miracle, there is imperative need for elucidation of terms. The word "miracle" carries with it *two* suggestions to the mind: first, the idea of *fact or event;* second, the idea of an *interpretative conception* of an event. And it is because the one term "miracle" involves and carries with it these two ideas that so much confused thinking exists in regard to this question. At one time when miracle is being discussed, it is thought of as *event*. Now if an event really has occurred, science must admit it, and bring it within the sphere of her consideration — and this no matter whether it be called a "miracle" in any of the senses in which the word is employed. At another time when miracle is being discussed, the *idea of miracle* is dominant in the mind. Then indeed it may fairly be maintained that science has no need of this idea. But that really leads us to the consideration of what is the idea of miracle which we desire to defend and maintain. Having ascertained that, we can seek to show that this idea is not irreconcilable with the principles on which science rests, and from which she works.

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[2] *Studies in Religious History*, Renan (Eng. tr.), p. 8.

There seem to be two truths, then, in the assertion that "science cannot admit miracle." First, that science approaches her task of investigation and explanation, believing that her task is not doomed to failure before it begins. She must conduct her researches into phenomena without any notion of miracle in the mind. That is just to say that she confines her attention to the facts and their causal sequences, believing that for every fact causal sequence is ascertainable. If she were to begin her task with the idea that no causal explanation is possible (in accord with the old idea of miracle), then she may as well stop short and say, "My task is doomed to futility and I go no further." "Science rightly makes the postulate that there are no miracles — which is no more than saying that science goes at her task in a courageous spirit and with a sense of responsibility. She means to do her best. She means to puzzle over every problem to the very end, instead of giving up weakly at the first difficulty and saying, This is doubtless a miracle and hence insoluble, so pray excuse me, and give me something easy."[3]

The second truth in the assertion so often made by science, that she cannot admit miracles, is that she has nothing to say about the *ultimate* interpretation of facts or events. Whatever notion the term "miracle" carries with it, at any rate it *does* carry that of an ultimate interpretation. Since that is so, science can never say of any event or fact that it is miraculous. To say that would be for her to go beyond her province and enter the domain of ultimate considerations, where religion and philosophy have their home.

Thus in such assertions we have an interesting and implicit recognition by science of her own limitations. Not, of course, that all who make such assertions would allow that this is the truth inherent in their attitude. Examination, however, reveals that this is so. Since science recognizes every fact as her province, the assertion that she does not admit miracle cannot mean that she excludes the consideration of any fact, however remarkable, and however seemingly inexplicable. It must therefore mean that she does not admit the *idea of miracle*. And with this we cordially agree, provided it is clearly noted that not admitting the idea of miracle is very different from ruling out as impossible the whole concept of the supernatural. Science does not admit the idea of miracle in her investigations, because her sphere is limited to facts and the "causal explanation" of facts. The ultimate significance of these "causal explanations" is the sphere of philosophy.

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[3] *The Religious Consciousness*, J. B. Pratt, p. 27.

A fair statement of the legitimate attitude of science to miracle would therefore be: Science can neither affirm nor deny the supernatural. She can accept or reject recorded "miracles" as *facts*. On historical or other grounds she may say, as we sought to show in Chapter II, "they did not happen," and she is quite justified in such investigations, provided she does not make an illegitimate use of *à priori* arguments to reach her conclusions. But she can neither say, "the miraculous is possible," nor "the miraculous is impossible" — at any rate she cannot do so without trespassing into the realm of philosophy which seeks an ultimate explanation of phenomena. This, we take it, is what the late Prof. G. B. Foster meant when he said: "It is metaphysically dogmatic to affirm either the possibility or the impossibility of miracles."[4]

In seeking therefore to understand the relation of science to "miracles," we find that she has no *à priori* objection to them. Huxley frequently emphasized this. "I am," he said, "too much a believer in Butler, and in the great principle of the *Analogy*, that 'there is no absurdity in theology so great that you cannot parallel it by a greater absurdity of nature' . . . to have any difficulties about miracles."[5] Science, if scientific, must approach her task without prepossessions. "Sit down before fact as a little child, be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly wherever and to whatever abysses Nature leads or you shall learn nothing."[6] "The true scientific attitude," says Boutroux, "does not consist in assuming *à priori* that some fact is strange, perhaps supernatural, and in seeking to get rid of it; it consists in analyzing the fact as we do others, and in finding room for it within the general system of natural facts."[7]

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[4] *Christianity in Its Modern Expression* (New York, 1921), p. 113.

[5] *Life and Letters*, Vol. I, p. 241.

These discussions lead thus to the more specific consideration of the *scope* and *aims* of science. We shall then be in a position to see the whole bearing of science on our subject.

As to the *scope of science*, it will be generally agreed today that all facts come within her province. "Science," says Boutroux, "as we now understand it, is the whole of positive knowledge acquired by humanity."[8] "The man who classifies facts of any kind whatever," says Karl Pearson, "who sees their mutual relation and describes their sequences, is applying the scientific method and is a man of science."[9] Thus we cannot assign any limit to the scope of science's investigations.

We may, as we hope to maintain, assign limits to her capacity — but not to her scope. "Science," as Tyndall said in his famous Belfast address, "claims unrestricted right of search." Every fact of every description is material for science. For her province is *experience:* every fact or event that comes within human experience comes within the range of science. It matters not whether these facts be what we call facts of religious experience, or of any other phase of human experience. In so far as they come within the range of experience they come within the range of science. "Science . . . for a long time claimed to accommodate herself solely to the phenomena of the material world. She left to metaphysics, or to literature, the phenomena of the moral order. But it is quite another matter today. Having, since the time of Descartes, more and more tested the efficiency of order and method in scientific work, and the relations between the different departments of knowledge, science is henceforth prepared to begin the study of all kinds of phenomena whatsoever.

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[6] *Life and Letters*, Vol. I, p. 219.

[7] *Science and Religion in Contemporary Philosophy* (Eng. tr.), p. 196.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 1.

[9] *The Grammar of Science*, p. 12.

However far-off an emotion of the soul may appear . . . it is a real, given, observable thing; therefore it is a phenomenon connected necessarily, according to law, with other phenomena. In vain does the believer protest that his act of faith, his prayer, and his sense of union with God, are to be regarded as entirely spiritual, and as in no way related to material things. Just because they fall within consciousness, they are amenable to science."[10]

The name which science gives to this, its all-inclusive sphere, is Nature. Her very name "natural science" indicates this. Nature, to the man of science, is the experienced all-of-reality. Now the question in many minds at once arises: Is science justified in so employing the term "Nature" as to include in it those moral and spiritual experiences, to which the term "supernatural" is so frequently assigned? Our answer to that question is that she *is* justified, *provided that she recognizes that the term is merely descriptive and not interpretative.* If that be recognized, then indeed we can, from the scientific point of view, cordially accept Huxley's definition of nature: "Nature means neither more nor less than that which is; the sum of phenomena presented to our experience, the totality of events, past, present, and to come. Every event must be taken to be part of nature until proof to the contrary is supplied. And such proof is from the nature of the case impossible."[11]

As to the *aim of science*, that may be stated as the endeavour to ascertain the *relations* between these facts. "It is not facts themselves which make science, but the method by which they are dealt with. The material of science is co-extensive with the whole physical universe. . . . When every fact, every present or past phenomenon of that universe, every phase of present or past life therein, has been examined, classified and co-ordinated with the rest, then the mission of science will be completed."[12]

It will thus be seen that science involves a faith — a faith that the facts and events in nature have relationship. The fact that her task is not merely to tabulate facts, but to *relate* (*i.e.*, show the relation of) facts, shows that this faith is implied in her method of approach. She believes that the events in nature are not isolated, unrelated events, but that they are all bound together into a unity by causal sequences. She further conducts her researches in the faith that these bonds which unite facts are discoverable. The notion that there are a set of facts or events which must of necessity forever retain their isolation from the rest of the scheme of things and be subject to no causal explanation, is one which science cannot accept.

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[10] Boutroux, *op. cit.*, p. 234.

[11] *Essay on Hume*, Chap. 7, p. 154.

[12] Karl Pearson, *op. cit.*, pp. 12–13.

This faith, inherent in scientific investigations, may be expressed in different ways. It means, for example, a faith in the rationality of the universe. When God gives man a mind, he means him to use it to the utmost; and the 'urge' within him that makes him use it is the faith that things are rational. "The only assumption which science is obliged to make," says Merz, in his monumental work, *The History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century*, "is the inevitable one that nature is intelligible to the human mind, which is the same as saying that we must assume the existence of some sort of Order." [13] It is this faith which inspires such a definition of science as the following from Boutroux:

"I call science the hypothesis of constant relations between phenomena." [14] "The hypothesis of constant relations between phenomena" is just another way of saying "faith in the intelligibility of nature," or "faith in the rationality of the universe." [15]

Every new discovery which fortifies this faith brings deep satisfaction to the mind and heart of man, which satisfaction is one of its deepest vindications. When Archimedes ran from his bath shouting "Eureka, Eureka," his exultant excitement was caused by the fortification which had just come to his faith in the rationality of the universe. It was as if from the heart of reality there had come this assurance to his instinctive faith that the universe was orderly — *it is so.* From nature there had been elicited another *Yea.* So also was it when Isaac Newton discovered that all the movements of the Heavens can be described by one physical law. The faith which had inspired all his patient observations and all his laborious calculations was now vindicated. In an excitement so intense that he could hardly see his figures, he found the fall of an apple to the earth to be 'due to the same cause' as the sweep of the Moon in her orbit, or the swinging of the Pleiades through space.

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[13] Vol. II, p. 472.

[14] *Op. cit.*, p. 244.

[15] On the basal scepticism which would result from the overthrow of the scientific faith in the intelligibility of Nature see the words of Kant: "Now, whenever the understanding is wrenched away from those laws of experience and observation, which by its categories it prescribes and imposes on all cosmical events whatsoever, then may it be said to have breathed out its last gasp; for in such fairy world its knowledge is useless and all human wisdom is at once defeated of its ends; seeing that in an order of affairs so loosened and dissolved, even the moral exercise of practical reason, in discharging duty, is subverted" (*Theory of Religion within the Boundary of Pure Reason.* Eng. tr., 1838, p. 110).

This faith may also be expressed as a faith in "a causal nexus, all-embracing, permitting no exception."[16] We must be careful, however, to note, in using such a term as nexus, that we do not mean any mechanistic or deterministic conception of causality. At the same time such terms are convenient for expressing our faith in the *Unity* of things. In other words, we believe in the principle of causality — every effect has a cause. If science has done one thing more than another for us, it is this: It has set forth the causal law so that it is now accepted by every educated person as axiomatic. That 'causal law' is really, as we have sought to show, a *necessity of thought.* But science has made explicit to the human consciousness what was merely implicit and therefore often unrecognized. There is still room for progress in getting this basal concept of science into the minds of men. As Huxley showed, the majority of people even in modern times do not dream of the expression and application of this law in nine-tenths of the facts of life. "Few gamblers but would stare if they were told that the falling of a die on a particular face is as much the effect of a definite cause as the fact of its falling; it is a proverb that 'The wind bloweth where it listeth'; and even thoughtful men usually receive with surprise the suggestion, that the form of every crest of every wave that breaks, wind-driven, on the sea-shore, and the direction of every particle of foam that flies before the gale, are the exact effects of definite causes, and as such, must be capable of being determined deductively from the laws of motion and the properties of air and water."[17]

[16] Wendland, *op. cit.*, p. 120. (Quoted from Adickes.)

[17] *Essay on Hume*, p. 143.

At the same time to such a degree has science succeeded in permeating the consciousness of thinking people with the notion of causality that few today would dogmatically assign any limit to her progress in ascertaining causal relationships. While it is true, as Huxley said, that the majority of people are surprised by the assertion that causal law applies to the seemingly fortuitous facts he mentions — the die, the wind, the wave — it is also true that whenever Huxley's assertions are read, the average person at once, and instinctively, recognizes their truth. If, for example, we were told, that there is no cause for these phenomena, not only should we be surprised, we should be instinctively sceptical. Let us take for example what, to the average man, in England at any rate, is the most fortuitous of events — the weather. Of nothing is it easier to speak in terms of *chance* than of this. Clouds, wind, temperature, visibility — all these seem incapable of scientific formulation and prediction. But we have the science known as meteorology — in its infancy no doubt as yet and subject, as all things pertaining to the weather are, to the humorous or cynical remarks of those who suffer from its vagaries. This study bears testimony to the fact that even in a seemingly fortuitous sphere science labours in the faith of formulating law. While the scientist may not yet be able accurately to predict the weather, he cannot conceive that it is unpredictable. He explains his present failures to foretell the weather by the complexity and intricacy of the factors and processes involved: and goes on in the confident assumption that the time will come when meteorology will be an exact science.

If we go beyond the realm of the physical order, and think of the realm of mind, or of morals, or even of religion, we find that science in like manner refuses to admit that progress in ascertaining relationships of sequence is impossible in these realms. Every true scientist would of course acknowledge that very different considerations enter with regard to these studies. But even so he cannot conceive that the law of cause and effect, or in other words the principle of unity or of intelligibility, does not hold there as well. It was with this thought of the impossibility of assigning any limit to the progress of science that Boutroux asked the significant question: "Are we bound to infer that the distance which separates inorganic matter from living matter, or real movement from abstract mechanics, is insurmountable?"[18]

It is of course a familiar fact that not yet has science bridged the gulf between the living and the non-living, the organic and the inorganic. No experiment that has so far been made has proved that this gulf is bridgable. At the same time science continues her experiments in the faith that the gulf will one day be bridged. Here, we may perhaps be allowed to say, it seems to us an unnecessary, and indeed perilous, apologetic for religious philosophy to take in the face of scientific naturalism — that this gulf is only bridgable by the *fiat* of an unrelated, creative act. But that perhaps may be left for the moment. The point we wish to make is, that science finds it impossible to believe that her investigations and causal explanations will never connect the inorganic with the organic. It is true, as Merz says, that "scientific thought . . . has not succeeded in bridging over the more important discontinuities which nature exhibits"[19]: or, as Prof. J. A. Thomson says, that "No hypothesis of abiogenesis (*i.e.*, of the origin of the living from the not-living) has yet been suggested that can be accepted with easy-going satisfaction."[20] Yet the latter writer goes on to add that in spite of the fact "that within our knowledge living organism always springs from similar living organism, and that no spontaneous generation of any microbe has ever yet been demonstrated in any culture-medium," we are not warranted "in making a dogma of *omne vivum e vivo*."[21] "Difficulties beset all the hypotheses of abiogenesis that have been as yet suggested; *yet, on general grounds, it seems likely that abiogenesis occurred.*"[22]

These "general grounds" indicate the faith on which science rests, and in the inspiration of which she works — that order, intelligibility, exists everywhere. If the scientist has not yet traced order in any sphere open to his investigations, he does not see there the disproof of his faith. He merely sees in it the complexity and intricacy of the facts which Nature presents to him,

[18] *Op. cit.*, p. 256.
[19] *Religion and Science*, p. 97.
[20] *The System of Animate Nature*, p. 384.
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 386.
[22] P. 403.

and he presses on in the hope that some day complexity will be reduced to unity, intricacy to order. His methods of observation, he concludes, have been faulty, his researches have been incomplete, his hypotheses have been too narrow.

Now the bearing of these principles of science on "miracles" at once manifests itself.

First, since *all* facts come within its sphere, events which have been called miracles are subject to scientific scrutiny. What exactly are those facts? asks science. Many on grounds of historical criticism may be concluded not to be facts. Others, when subject to scientific scrutiny, seem to be partly fact and partly fancy, and what exactly the fact-basis is, it is not always easy to determine. But, remembering that the methods of observation in past ages were in no degree scientific, science is justified in maintaining a critical attitude to so-called facts which are capable of "explanation" along lines which are seen today to account for mistakes. At the same time, she is not justified in rejecting all fact-basis for miracle stories on the simple ground that conditions of scientific investigation in distant ages were not observed, or because, to use the words of Voltaire and Renan, they did not happen before the élite of the French Academy in the Hall of Science in Paris. Judged by such a criterion, many well-established facts of the past would have to be relegated to the region of fiction. If in ages gone by men had not the fully-equipped scientific mentality, they can hardly be blamed. They did the best they could with what they had.

Secondly, since the aim of science is causal explanation, and since she works under the inspiration of a faith that this will apply to all facts, whether some of these be called "miracles" or not, she approaches what she conceives as the ascertained fact-basis of miracles in order to seek its explanation. She maintains, to use the words of Boutroux, that "the history of science proves that we are right in affirming a continuity between what we know and what we do not know"[23]; and confidently she seeks to ascertain this continuity in regard to so-called "miracles."

The question at once arises, How far has she succeeded?

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[23] *Op. cit.*, p. 358.

In regard to what events, known to past ages of mankind as miracles in the sense of inexplicable, supernatural interferences, has she up to this point afforded scientific explanation?

It is instructive and necessary for our subject to consider first the beliefs and practices of *primitive man.* Such an investigation will lead at once to the conclusion, a conclusion which we should on other grounds expect, that he frequently saw the "interposition" of supernatural powers in happenings which science has shown to be quite natural. Primitive man was not a scientist. He did not accurately observe events; he therefore was often prone to jump to wrong conclusions as to their significance. A quite recent and interesting illustration of this mistaken observation of facts, and, in consequence, of the fallacious conclusions drawn therefrom, is found in Schweitzer's book *On the Edge of the Primeval Forest.* A native girl, writing to another about the amazing cures wrought by the doctor, thus narrated what was happening: "Since the Doctor came here we have seen the most wonderful things happen. First of all he kills the sick people; then he cures them, and after that, he wakes them up again."[24] Uncivilized man thus regards the familiar fact known to us as anaesthesia as death. Further, he did not seek to co-ordinate the sequences he observed in Nature into what we call "natural laws." That he had no knowledge of "law," used in its strict philosophic sense of sequence, it would be of course a mistake to suppose. Though he had not arrived at the abstract conception of the "Uniformity of Nature," as far as his observations took him he knew it nevertheless. He had seen the annual "miracle" of Nature's re-birth in the spring time. He was not therefore filled with forebodings when the hand of decay was laid on his forests and fields. He did not go to sleep at night trembling lest the sun should not rise in the morning. He slept securely in the faith of Nature's uniformity. Though he did not know what the "laws of gravity" were, he knew from experience what happened if he threw a stone into water, or if someone fell over a cliff. When the rain fell, he was quite confident that the labour he had expended in constructing a dam at the foot of a hill would not be in vain. He had seen that water flowed down hill, and his belief in Nature's uniformity prevented the very thought of building his dam at the top of the hill arising in his mind.

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[24] P. 66.

The idea, therefore, that primitive man had no knowledge of "law" is erroneous; it would involve, as Jevons has well said, that "Primitive man lived in a state of perpetual surprise." [25]

At the same time his conception of Nature and of law was in the undeveloped state of the child's. Nature while uniform could be interfered with. The beliefs conveniently designated by the term *animism* make this clear. Early man believed that Nature was alive with spiritual agencies which might be helpful or harmful to his interests. The cocoanut which drops from the tree and just misses him calls from him the instinctive ejaculation: "Ho! Ho! art thou there?" The wave which almost swamps his canoe elicits a similar thought. The distinction may be drawn between the "animism" and "spiritism" of primitive man, the former word indicating the stage of belief when material phenomena were personified — as for example when the flowing stream was regarded as living, apart from any idea of a spirit inhabiting it; the latter word indicating the stage of belief when material objects were conceived as the abode of spirits.[26] The distinction, however, is not very sharply defined and indeed does not affect the point we are emphasizing, namely, that there was to primitive man a capriciousness about natural sequences which made it impossible for him to conceive of the "Uniformity of Nature." Since all things were animated, primitive man could never be sure what Nature would be up to. The future of an inanimate object may be scientifically predicted; the action of living agencies does not come within that assured category.

The unscientific attitude of primitive man to Nature may further be seen in his belief in *magic*. What is termed, for example, *sympathetic magic* reveals a mistaken conception of the causal relation. It may be described as the naïve belief that "like affects like," and may be regarded with Jevons as "simply the applied science of the savage." [27] Or, it may be regarded as a primitive theory of the *solidarity* of objects which are related to each other by *similarity* or by *contact*.

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[25] *Introduction to the History of Religion*, p. 18.

[26] Cf. Galloway, *Principles of Religious Development*, p. 45.

[27] *Op. cit.*, p. 35.

Of the naïvely credulous conception of cause and effect involved in sympathetic magic, science has long shown us the mistaken futility. Like does not necessarily affect like. Yet in spite of the host of facts which disprove the theory on which sympathetic magic rests, it persists among savage peoples.[28] It is an illustration of the unscientific attitude which refuses to observe those facts which contradict pre-established theories. "*Les sauvages sont d'une facilité à croire ce qu'on leur dit, que les plus facheuses expériences n'ont jamais pu guérir*," wrote an eighteenth century Jesuit traveller.[29] And it is this psychological fact which explains why primitive man, in spite of his naïve curiosity *causas cognoscere rerum*, does not discover that like does not affect like. Modern man is prone to the same attitude. In spite of the falsification of the innumerable prophecies of the end of the world, prophets still confidently emerge with regularly recurring assurances that "the day" is just at hand. It is, as the "new" psychologist would remind us, so easy to reject or ignore facts which are out of harmony with our "mental constellations." Even Darwin had found by experience that facts and thoughts which were opposed to his general results "were far more apt to escape from the memory than favourable ones." [30] How much more easy must this be for the untrained, unscientific intellect! Thus are to be understood the survival of such relics of sympathetic magic as the wearing of charms, the nailing of horse-shoes over the doorways of houses, the fearful regard for the number 13, and many similar superstitious practices.

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[28] For a highly interesting illustration of primitive magical practice among present-day natives see *Unexplored New Guinea*, by Wilfred N. Beaver (1920), p. 83. There the story is told of how to ensure the death of a native magical rites were observed. Thereafter "*that there should be no doubt about the result*," the man was hit on the back of the head with an axe. The striking feature of the situation was that no one attributed the death of the native to the knock with the axe. *Post hoc ergo propter hoc* — the death of the native followed the magical rites, hence it was caused by them. In similar fashion my child concludes when on blowing against the watch I hold in my hand, the face swings open, that the blowing has caused this. And he himself will persevere in his endeavour to blow the face of the watch open; his repeated failures not producing in his mind the idea that deception has been played upon him.

[29] Charlevoix, *Histoire de la Nouvelle France*, Vol. II, p. 378.

[30] See *Life of Charles Darwin* by Francis Darwin (1902), p. 42. (Dr. Ernest Jones cites this illustration at p. 67, *Papers on Psycho-Analysis*. 3d ed., 1923.)

Traces of sympathetic magic are seen also in the belief held in most "Catholic" countries that the "relics" of saints can effect "miracles." Popular Roman Catholic superstitions about the power of relics have behind them the same underlying philosophy as has primitive man's sympathetic magic. To possess the bones of a saint gave one access to the same "miracles" which he could perform when alive. Contact with his relics was as good as contact with himself, for his relics had by contact with him assimilated (if we may use the word) his magical potences. At first sight there does not seem much in common between the savage magical practice of planting a good-sized stone like a yam in order to insure a good crop for his sowing, and the belief in the miraculous efficacy of the bones of the saints and martyrs. But on deeper scrutiny the same theory is seen to be latent in both cases. It is the theory of magical *similarity* or of magical *contact.* Likewise when the savage, in order to ensure the death of his enemy, makes an image of him and knocks it to pieces, or when he seeks to cure a boil on the back of his neck by the simple expedient of carving a boil in wood and then destroying it, the same theory is latent in his mind as is behind the belief in the miraculous efficacy of thorns, of drops of blood, of garments, and indeed of anything that has come into contact with a diseased hero or saint.[31]

To trace the philosophy of sympathetic magic through the history of human customs and beliefs would be a fascinating task, but one beyond the scope of this work. Suffice it to say that this philosophy had great vogue in ancient and medieval times. Astrology, as practised by the Chaldaeans and later peoples, had behind it this same notion of *sympathy* or *solidarity.* Prof. Franz Cumont has cogently set forth the thesis that both astrology and sympathetic magic were "inspired by a belief in universal sympathy, according to which occult and powerful relations exist between human beings and dead objects, all of which possess a mysterious life." [32]

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[31] A biblical illustration of sympathetic magic is seen in the account of I Samuel, 6, of the Philistines who were plagued with tumours making five golden tumours "according to the number of the Lords of the Philistines," and placing them in the ark.

[32] See *Astrology and Magic,* The Open Court (Chicago, 1909), p. 661. The late Dr. Edwin Hatch pointed out very suggestively that the demonic theory of disease

Magic proper as practised among uncivilized peoples further reveals this unscientific temper of mind. Whatever else art magic means to its devotees, it does involve the belief that the processes of nature can be interfered with. The medicine man, for example, such is the savage belief, can by his spell cause crops to wither, transform men into wild beasts, bring the rain, and do a thousand other things beyond natural capacity.[33] The basal belief behind art magic and sorcery is that man may possess and exercise power over Nature. In sympathetic magic the mere resemblance or proximity in space or in time was latently regarded as the causal factor in the things achieved. In magic proper a power is supposed to be held by an individual or a class which is adequate for the accomplishment of physical wonders. The distinction has been drawn between magical practices where "a power not itself personal is supposed to belong to the magician, to his instrument, or to particular substances, and to pass into, or act upon, the object"; *and* the cases where "the magician feels as if his will-effort was the efficient factor."[34] But the distinction is somewhat fine and not easy to maintain. The main point is that man is supposed to have inherent in him a power which may give him a certain "sovereignty over nature," to use the phrase of Frazer in *The Golden Bough.*[35] Hegel expressed the idea behind art magic thus: "The human consciousness, any definite human being, is recognised as the ruling power over Nature in virtue of its own will."[36] Jevons says: "Art Magic is the exercise by men of powers which are supernatural, *i.e.* of powers which by their

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in early Christian times had as one of its underlying philosophic causes the idea that matter and spirit were conceived monistically and not, as with later thought, dualistically. "'Whatever acts, is body,' it was said. Mind is the sublest form of body, but it is body nevertheless. The conception of a direct action of the one upon the other presented no difficulty. It was imagined, for instance, that demons might be the direct causes of diseases, because the extreme tenuity of their substance enabled them to enter, and to exercise a malignant influence upon, the bodies of men" (*The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church* (1890), p. 20).

[33] See Andrew Lang, *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, Chap. IV, or a standard work such as H. H. Bancroft's *Native Races of the Pacific States of North America* (5 vols., 1875–76).

[34] *The Psychological Origin and Nature of Religion*, J. H. Leuba (1909), pp. 50–51.

[35] *The Golden Bough*, I, 78–79.

[36] *Philosophy of Religion* (Eng. tr.), Vol. I, p. 293.

definition it is beyond man to exercise."[37] Andrew Lang says: "On this belief in man's power to effect events beyond the limits of natural possibility is based the whole theory of magic, the whole power of sorcerers."[38] That much of this belief is based upon credulity and delusion will hardly be doubted. And that such beliefs have persisted into comparatively recent times, even among civilized peoples, as may be witnessed in the belief in witchcraft, is another illustration of the obstacles the scientific temper still has to overcome. It may, however, be taken as axiomatic that as science advances, belief in magic declines.

With all these confused ideas as to nature, it is not to be wondered at that uncivilized man, when he sees some striking and unusual happening, immediately posits supernatural agency. He trusted, as we have seen, to the general sequences of nature unless or until these were interfered with by animistic or magical agencies. But the totally unexpected sometimes happened and he had no means of discovering a "natural explanation" for this, to him, break in the sequence he had come to expect. When, for example, on a cloudless day the sun became suddenly darkened and mysterious night descended, he trembled with supernatural fears. How was he to know that the moon had come between the sun and himself, and so caused what we call an eclipse? He had no "science." So when the unexpected happened, he explained it instinctively in terms of what seemed to him the known; and the "known" to him was supernatural power.

Many illustrations might be given of this tendency of uncivilized and unscientific man, to attribute supernatural causes to natural phenomena. He is forever leaping to the hypothesis of supernatural causes for events which are capable of scientific explanation. This fact is of great significance and interest to the student of religion. For it serves to show how instinctive was primitive man's belief in a Higher Power. It might be urged that so far from discrediting such a belief, it is, in the last analysis, a support of it: for it reveals how ineradicable, how natural, is man's faith in the powers above. Thus he explains what he does not understand, for example, an eclipse, in terms of the belief that is to him central and instinctive — the belief in the supernatural. At the same time this attitude of the savage is unscientific. When an event occurs for which we cannot account, the scientist does not conclude that some supernatural force is at work which he is not able to discover. At once he asks if any other hypothesis will explain the phenomenon. If, for example, some unknown heavenly body comes with startling rapidity into his ken, he does not conclude that such a body is not subject to the laws which govern the motions of other heavenly bodies. He begins his careful investigations and calculations to bring this new phenomenon within the sphere of law, and is not to be dissuaded from these endeavours by any assertions that the event is a supernaturally caused portent.[39] Such a star is quite "natural" to one who knows that the heavens are constantly the theatres of the birth and death of worlds. Beside which fact he knows that in distant ages no attempts were made at *complete* observations. In the ages of man's low mental development there must have been innumerable remarkable star phenomena, not even observed, such as are now designated by the term "temporary stars" or "Novas." Who then could be confident to say of any star which comes suddenly into man's ken that it is "supernaturally caused"? It may have appeared before, and it may appear again. The scientific mind, if convinced that any such phenomenon took place, will seek at once to ascertain the laws which will govern its return. A brilliant vindication of this scientific method was the well-known prediction by Halley of the return of the 1682 comet, strikingly verified in 1759, fifteen years after the death of the predictor. When, again, the perturbations of Uranus were observed, the astronomer did not conclude interference with the law of gravitation. He sought to ascertain how these unexpected movements could be explained in accord with that law. His calculations led him to suppose the existence of a mass in a fixed point in space; and when he pointed his telescope to that region, a new planet, Neptune, was revealed.

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[37] *Op. cit.*, p. 35.

[38] *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, Vol. I, p. 91.

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[39] The many records of "miracle stars" will at once occur to the mind of the student. Besides the familiar narrative in Matthew there are many stories of stars seen at the birth of saints, *e.g.*, at the birth of St. Andrew of Siena and St. Francis of Paula; and many accounts of stars to give supernatural guidance, *e.g.*, to St. John the Silent and to St. Solangia. (See Brewer, *Dictionary of Miracles* (1884 ed.), pp. 296 f.)

Events, then, which uncivilized man might have called "miracles," if he had had the word, and a sufficiently developed mentality, we see to be explicable by science. His confused conceptions both of Nature and of the supernatural begot a naïve credulity which made him see in unexpected natural events the interposition of supernatural power. It is this confused conception of the natural and of the supernatural which has come down through the centuries and has coloured the conception of "miracle" ever since. Hence it is that miracle has been regarded as *interposition*, as *violation*. "At all times," says Jevons, "the supernatural has been the miraculous, and the essence of miracle has been thought to be the violation of law."[40]

This ascription of supernatural power to natural if unexpected happenings, so characteristic of primitive man, is by no means peculiar to him. We have here a mental tendency that long persisted, and in many *Catholic* countries of Europe today still persists. Events which the unscientific temper of the times has regarded as supernatural interventions, or as violations of law, are shown by science to be in accord with law. Such an event, for example, as "the moving backward" of the sun upon the dial, as recorded in II Kings, 20: 9–11, creates no difficulty to the theologian of scientific mind. He will (as, *e.g.*, Spinoza) explain it by a *parhelion*.[41] Or, again, such a story as that of "The Star in the East" is not regarded by scientific theologians, if historical, as a supernatural intervention contrary to law. As early as the eighteenth century the French Benedictine, Dom Calmet, maintained: "*Nous croyons que c'était un météore enflammé dans la moyenne région de l'air qui, ayant été remarqué par les Mages avec des circonstances et des qualités extraordinaires fut pris par eux pour un phénomène miraculeux.*"[42] Again, events such as images from which there fell "drops of blood" are in some cases quite naturally explicable. Many such events are recorded as having occurred, significantly enough in India where in certain districts a red (laterite) dust is fairly commonly brought by the land winds in hot weather. This colours the drops which are caused either by the moisture from the breath of a crowd of people or by the rain. Upon such a basis in fact are created many "miracle" stories.[43] Or, again, such an event as that referred to by Newman as the "miracle of the tongueless martyrs" creates no insuperable difficulty to the scientist. He will instance cases to show that the retention of speech when the tongue is lost is not necessarily due to supernatural assistance. People who have been subjected to such cruelty *have* spoken so as to be understood. A natural explanation meets such cases.[44] Even Newman himself stated that he was willing to "frankly confess that the present advance of science tends to make it probable that various facts take place and have taken place, in the order of Nature, which hitherto have been considered by Catholics as simply supernatural."[45] In practice, however, this willingness of Catholic writers has not always been conspicuous.

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[40] *Op. cit.*, p. 20.

[41] See *Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne*, December, 1897, article by Émile Nourry, *La Bible et la Critique Catholique du 18me. Siècle*, p. 346. For an interesting record of phenomena designated by the term "Parhelion" see the old Jesuit Missionary Charlevoix's famous *History of New France* (Eng. tr., New York, 1866, 6 vols)., Vol. 3, pp. 172 ff. See also *Conférences faites au Musée Guimet* (Paris, 1907), p. 125, for similar phenomena.

[42] See *Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne*, December, 1897.

Many so-called "modern miracles" are similarly explicable by science. What are called the "miracles of Lourdes," for example, are to be regarded as within the scope of scientific explanation. That many of them are explicable by modern medical science, few would deny. Regarding others which are not at present susceptible of such explanation, we are not justified in accepting the hypothesis of orthodox Roman Catholicism — viz., that "Our Lady" has interposed on behalf of the faithful. The closest scientific scrutiny of the facts is the first *desideratum*, in order that we may know exactly what has happened. It is not, of course, forgotten that there is a *Bureau des Constatations Médicales* at Lourdes; but that may be regarded, with a recent French writer, as "*Police des Miracles, non pas étude.*" "Its rôle . . . is confined to unmasking the grosser deceits, or to moderating the compromising excesses of a too-exalted zeal."[46] And even if we are certain as to the exact nature of the facts, and find that some are not at present explicable, science refuses to give up the quest for explanation. She must demur, for example, to the utterance of a recent orthodox Roman Catholic writer on this subject. "The question as to whether the conquests of science in the near or more remote future may not furnish the key to those occurrences we find inexplicable, can safely be answered in the negative. These are facts of a vital nature, and, despite all the improvements the foes of the supernatural invoke, no *savant* will be able to modify the natural laws that govern human life."[47] Science refuses to accept this *à priori* limitation of her capacity to explain. The same writer says: "When science records facts without being able to account for them, the reason is that the laws at work transcend the human understanding; they are extraordinary laws, or better still, supernatural."[48] It would be difficult to find a more unscientific utterance. Science does *not* conclude that facts at present without explanation must therefore be supernatural. If that had been her attitude, science would have made no advances. We should still be at the stage of mental development represented by primitive man.

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[43] For illustrations of such phenomena in India see *The Voyage of John Huyghen Van Linschoten in the East Indies* (Hakluyt Soc. ed., 2 vols. 1885), Vol. I, p. 86. See also *Conférences faites au Musée Guimet* (Paris, 1907), p. 124.

[44] See *The Tongue not Essential to Speech,* E. Twisleton (London, 1873).

[45] *Apologia* (1873 ed.), p. 303.

We have therefore here frankly to acknowledge our indebtedness to science. She has explained much that was at one time inexplicable. For this, our attitude must not be one of reluctant concession to her of events claimed in the past for religion. It must be one of cordial and frank avowal of indebtedness. The history of the controversy between science and religion during the past centuries is by no means inspiring reading. It is pathetic to note the mistakes, the misunderstandings, that arose on both sides. Every right-thinking man today recognizes that when Pope Paul V in 1616 issued his decree denying the heliocentric doctrine on the grounds that such doctrine was "entirely opposed to Holy Writ," he was not only trespassing on the realm of science, but doing considerable dis-service to religion. Such mistaken apologetics for the Christian faith have been many since those days, both from the side of Catholicism and of Protestantism. The understanding student of the history of human thought will not, indeed, be unduly surprised at these encroachments of theology into the realms of science. Religion being, to use the words of Baron von Hügel, "something so entirely *sui generis*, so claimful and supreme," and being "qua religion, so authoritative and absolute," the surprise would be occasioned if in a not too scientific age she had not made these encroachments. We are, however, living in better days. Not, indeed, that there is now no longer any danger of similarly mistaken apologetics for religion. "To starve," as von Hügel again says, "or to suspect, to cramp or to crush this phenomenal apprehension and investigation, in the supposed interests of the ulterior truths, must ever be a besetting temptation and weakness for the religious instinct, whenever this instinct is strong and fixed."[49] But there is in these days considerable *rapprochement* between religion and science. No longer is it thought necessary to maintain the truth of religion by refusing to acknowledge the legitimate rights of science. No longer do we regard the greatest sacred literature in the world as a record of scientific happenings, and seek, with a painstaking but mistaken zeal, to square the early chapters of Genesis with the results of scientific investigation. No longer are we alarmed when science suggests that man may have begun to be on this planet three million years ago, and that the beginnings of life here may be dated back to eight hundred millions of years ago.[50] These interesting, if unproved, hypotheses have, we see, no destructive bearing on Faith. We have come to-day to a truer understanding of the religion enshrined in our sacred books. We see that religion in essence is not indissolubly wedded to any scientific theory of the origin of things. We have come to maintain with Prof. James Ward that "Faith contradicts nothing that science is in a position to affirm, and asserts nothing that science is in a position to deny."[51] In the assurance that no possible discovery of science can give denial to the essentials of

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[46] Ed. le Roy in *Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne,* November, 1916. *Essai sur la notion du miracle*, p. 171.

[47] *Twenty Cures at Lourdes*, p. 209. Dr. de Grandmaison, Eng. tr., 1920.

[48] *Op. cit.*, p. 241.

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[49] Cf. *The Mystical Element of Religion*, Vol. I, p. 46.

[50] Possible dates suggested by Prof. J. A. Thomson, p. 401, *op. cit.*

[51] *The Realm of Ends*, p. 417.

Faith, we may say to science with whole-hearted sincerity, God speed you in your researches. For we believe with Renan that "the truths which Science reveals always surpass the dreams which she destroys." [52]

To such a degree has this scientific method and spirit, which seeks to explain all events, taken possession of the age, that even those who still defend a conception of miracle as an inexplicable intervention of the supernatural into the natural manifest the same spirit. The endeavour to "naturalise the miraculous," as it has been called, has by no means been confined to those who reject the traditional view of miracle. The endeavour to "explain" miracles is found even among those who maintain their ultimate inexplicability. Apologists for the old view of miracle, in spite of themselves, ask the *How* of the matter. In illustration of this it is sufficient to remember the method of "explanation" common all through the centuries, and which may be called the "acceleration of natural processes explanation." Many illustrations of this method might be given. The turning of Moses' rod into a serpent is "explained" by the hypothesis that in rotting wood serpents might originate; so that "in this case a process gradual at other times took place instantaneously." Endeavours along similar lines have been made to "explain" Gospel miracles as the turning of water into wine at Cana, the feeding of the five thousand, and the cursing of the barren fig tree. St. Augustine was peculiarly attracted by this method of "explaining" miracles. "He that made wine on that day at the marriage feast in those six water-pots which He commanded to be filled with water, the Same every year does the like in vines. For as what the servants put into the water-pots was changed into wine by the operation of the Lord, just so what the clouds pour forth is changed into wine by the operation of the same Lord." [53] "He multiplied the five loaves in the hands of them that break them, Who multiplieth the seeds that grow in the earth, so as that a few grains are sown, and whole barns are filled." [54]

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[52] Cf. Address on Spinoza in *Studies in Religious History*.

[53] See St. Augustine on St. John (Pusey's *Library of the Fathers*, Vol. I, p. 123. Homily 8).

[54] See St. Augustine's *Sermons on the New Testament* (Pusey's *Library of the Fathers*, Vol. II, p. 580).

Some of the endeavours to "explain," either by the acceleration or by the analogy of natural processes, will strike the modern mind as somewhat unreal and fantastic. At the same time they are interesting testimonies to the almost ineradicable instinct within thinking men — the endeavour to explain, to understand the *How* of events. We are almost incurably scientific today. To say that an event is a "miracle" is not sufficient even for those who regard the necessary inexplicability of the event as essential to the idea of miracle. Every preacher must have noticed the relieved welcome on the part of the thoughtful among his hearers that has been accorded to any endeavour he has made to show that a difficult "miracle" is susceptible of "natural explanation." The "welcome" is indicative of the instinctive scientific mentality of our age. The "relief" is indicative on the other hand of the conservative unwillingness to give up the historicity of the incident. Few in modern congregations have yet been able to differentiate between or understand the respective causes of their feeling of "welcome" and their feeling of "relief."

The incident in the Gospels known as the miraculous draft of fishes may be taken to illustrate this all-pervasive scientific spirit. The age asks instinctively: How are we to conceive that this event happened? Was it what we may call a miracle of *knowledge* — namely, that Our Lord had knowledge hidden from the fishermen as to the whereabouts of the fish? Or was it a miracle of *power* — namely, that He controlled the movements of the fish into shoals, into a certain direction, and so into the nets of the disciples? Or was it a quite natural event susceptible of a perfectly reasonable explanation? This last interpretation of the incident is the one to which the modern mind gives the greatest welcome. Recent research into the habits of the Galilean fishes and of the method of detecting the presence of shoals afford, it is held by the scientific and religious reader of the Gospels alike, an adequate explanation.[55] To such an extent is the whole age under the influence of the basal causal principles of science.

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[55] See *Nature*, Oct. 28 and Nov. 18, 1922 on "The Miraculous Draught of Fishes — An explanation."

But having now acknowledged the debt owed to science for her patient and laborious investigations into phenomena, enabling her to explain much that was accounted inexplicable and so "supernatural" in the past, it is necessary to add that science has often in the past transgressed her own principles. She has often manifested an *à priori* dogmatism as to what could be and as to what could not be. The truly scientific attitude is not to rule out what are claimed to be facts on the ground that they do not fit in with the "laws" which science has already formulated. This is the old dogmatic attitude which science has criticized in past theological apologetic. But often she herself has been guilty of the fallacious reasoning and method which she has condemned in the "queen of the Sciences." The scientific method and spirit which have been frequently transgressed by science herself was thus expressed by Laplace: "We are so far from knowing all the agents of Nature, and their various modes of action, that it would not be philosophical to deny any phenomena merely because in the actual state of our knowledge they are inexplicable. This only ought we to do — in proportion to the difficulty there seems to be in admitting the facts should be the scrupulous attention we bestow on their examination." [56]

Students of the history of science are themselves most familiar with these dogmatic errors, and they themselves may be left to furnish the illustrations. "Whenever the scientific men of any age," said Alfred Russel Wallace, "have denied the facts of investigators on *à priori* grounds, they have always been wrong." [57] And he affords many illustrations from the annals of science in proof of this contention. Many learned scientists in the fifteenth century, brought together to study the ideas and projects of Christopher Columbus, declared unanimously that the earth could not be a sphere. Harvey's announcement of his theory of the circulation of the blood was treated by the learned of his day with derision and contempt. At one time science was incredulous as to the fall of meteoric stones. "There are no stones in the sky, it is therefore impossible that any can fall on the earth."[58] Such words seem today to be incredibly unscientific; they are, however, the words of a very eminent scientist in the eighteenth century. "As late as 1790 the 'Décade philosophique,' as well as the Paris Academy and many learned persons, ridiculed the authentic reports of the fall of meteors, and Chladni's classical dissertation on the *Stone of Pallas*."[59] "When Benjamin Franklin brought the subject of lightning-conductors before the Royal Society, he was laughed at as a dreamer, and his paper was not admitted to the 'Philosophical transactions.' When Young put forth his wonderful proofs of the undulatory theories of light, he was equally hooted at as absurd by the popular scientific writers of the day. The 'Edinburgh Review' called upon the public to put Thomas Gray into a straight jacket for maintaining the practicability of railroads. Sir Humphry Davy laughed at the idea of London ever being lighted with gas. When Stephenson proposed to use locomotives on the Liverpool and Manchester railway, learned men gave evidence that it was impossible that they could go even twelve miles an hour."[60] Even Comte himself, who maintained so dogmatically that the age of theological dogmatism was past, declared that men could never know anything as to the chemical composition of the heavenly bodies.[61]

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[56] Cf. Presidential Address by Sir W. Barrett to the S. P. R.; quoted from Laplace, *Théorie Analytique des Probabilités*.

[57] *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, p. 17.

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[58] Cf. Saintyves, *Le Discernement*, etc., p. 112. (Lavoisier quoted.)

[59] Merz, *History of European Thought*, etc., Vol. I, p. 327.

[60] A. R. Wallace, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

[61] Cf. J. A. Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 15. Cf. also Flammarion's *The Unknown* (Eng. tr. of *L'Inconnu*), (New York, 1900), p. 12. We have all doubtless heard of M. Flammarion's friend who ironically dedicated his work *Choses de l'Autre Monde* thus:

"To the memory of all savants
Brevited, patented,
Crowned with palms, decorated and buried,
Who have been opposed to the rotation of the earth: —
To meteorites,
To Galvanism,
To the circulation of the blood,
To vaccination,
To waves of light,
To lightning-rods,
To daguerreotypes,
To steam-power,
To propellers,
To steam-boats,
To railroads,

We must therefore be on our guard against a scientific dogmatism which would lay down the limits of natural possibility in accord with past formulations or "laws." So often the impossibilities of one generation, as we have seen, are the commonplace facts of the next. And there is no reason to suppose that this will not continue in the future; unless indeed, and this is the great *desideratum*, science ceases altogether to talk about impossibilities and confines herself to the investigation and the explanation of facts. Scepticism may be just as unscientific as credulity. To reject facts without investigation may be as harmful to the true interests of science as to accept them without question. Indeed it may be more harmful, for its fallacy is less easily unmasked. Its dangers are more subtle, in that it is not so obviously unscientific as unquestioning credulity. This attitude may easily retard scientific progress, by warding off investigation from facts whose patient elucidation might open up new fields of knowledge, new realms of potency. The advancement of knowledge in the past has been achieved because there were those who were scientific enough to believe that the unexplained was not necessarily the false; to whom, to use the words of Sir Oliver Lodge, "the new and unfamiliar" was "the vantage ground, not of scientific dogmatism, but of scientific enquiry."[62] There is every reason to believe that the advancement of knowledge in the future will be determined by a similar attitude.[63]

Such considerations should prevent science from hastily denying the historicity of *all* the events which theology has called "miracles." Facts at one time summarily rejected by

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To lighting by gas,
To magnetism,
And all the rest.
And to those now living, or shall yet be born
Who do the same in the present day,
Or who shall do the same hereafter."

[62] *Hibbert Journal*, October, 1916, p. 152.

[63] Cf. the words of Dr. Eugène Osty: "To wish to conform Nature to our own mental content is to condemn ourselves to illusion and to sterilize research, whereas progress towards truth is never anything but a laborious and progressive modification of the human mind in face of immutable realities." (*Super-normal Faculties in Man: an Experimental Study*, translated from the French by Stanley De Brath, 1923.)

science, because no explanation of them was possible at the time, are now accepted without much question, because such an explanation has been found. It is coming to be fairly generally believed that some of the so-called miraculous events of the past, now set aside as fictions by science, will with the growth of the scientific temper be, if not accepted, at least regarded as within the region of possibility. Already we are seeing in these days the readiness on the part of science to accept certain so-called miracles in the history of the Church. Some of them, known as "miracles of healing," will be considered in greater detail in the next chapter. Hegel was sufficiently in advance of the science of his time to condemn what he called "modern unbelief in occurrences of this sort."[64] That "unbelief" was very widespread in scientific circles a hundred years ago. The change today is striking. Phenomena, such as, for example, those of "stigmatization," are no longer brushed aside as fables. Science is now familiar with facts in some ways similar, and hence approaches the numerous records of stigmatization with the idea of their possibility or even probability. It will suffice to make reference here to the famous nineteenth century case of the Belgian, Louise Lateau, whose *stigmata* gave rise to long and learned discussions in many European languages. The dilemma which one medical scientist[65] maintained was involved in this case, viz. *Fraud or Miracle*, would now be heartily repudiated by medical science. That a case of stigmatization should be a fact does not involve either that deception had been practised or that it had been "supernaturally" caused.

The striking nature of this change of attitude on the part of science is well illustrated from the following words of Lecky in regard to an incident to which we have previously referred. "We believe, with tolerable assurance, a crowd of historical events on the testimony of one or two Roman historians; but when Tacitus and Suetonius describe how Vespasian restored a blind man to sight, and a cripple to strength, their deliberate assertions do not even beget in our minds a suspicion that the narrative may possibly be true."[66] Today not only do these records beget a suspicion that they may be true, but elicit an instinctive willingness on the part of scientific students of psycho-therapy to believe that the events did happen in large measure as described. This change of attitude on the part of science is an illustration of the contention of the late William James in his *Principles of Psychology*. "As so often happens, a fact is denied till a welcome interpretation comes with it. Then it is admitted readily enough and evidence quite insufficient to back a claim so long as the Church had an interest in making it, proves to be quite sufficient for modern scientific enlightenment, the moment it appears that a reputed Saint can thereby be claimed as a case of 'hystero-epilepsy.'" [67]

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[64] *Philosophy of Religion* (Eng. ed.), Vol. III, p. 119.

[65] Professor Virchow. See Flammarion's *Mysterious Psychic Forces* (Eng. ed.), p. 20.

[66] *History of European Morals*, p. 369.

Happily the relations between science and religion are becoming more understanding, and so more sympathetic. Science herself is coming to see how considerable are her limitations. She no longer speaks dogmatically of the "uniformity of natural law" as if she knew everything about natural law. The growth of scientific knowledge itself has revealed to science how relative her formulations are. As knowledge grows from more to more, the "more of reverence," for which Tennyson pleaded, comes almost inevitably. For we come to see ever more and more clearly the vastness of our ignorance. The more we know, the more we know we don't know. With greater understanding than ever before we may speak, to use the phrase of Prof. J. Arthur Thomson, of "the unfathomed universe." Reality is infinitely greater than we dream. The loftiest flights of our imaginations will not bring us within reach of the height of things. Pascal expressed the truth in words of great sublimity: "If our sight fails us at this point, let us pass beyond it by means of an imagination that will sooner grow weary in conceiving than Nature in supplying. The entire visible world is but an imperceptible speck in the vast lap of Nature." The same great mind expressed a similar thought when he said: "Reason's final move consists in recognising that there are an infinity of things which go beyond her." [68] Our own Shakespeare put it thus:

> "There are more things in Heaven and Earth, Horatio,
> Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

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[67] Vol. II, pp. 612–13.

[68] *Pensées.*

Carlyle expressed the same truth: "System of Nature! To the wisest man, wide as is his vision, Nature remains of quite infinite depth, of quite infinite expansion; and all Experience thereof limits itself to some few computed centuries and measured square miles. The course of Nature's phases, on this our little fraction of a Planet, is partially known to us: but who knows what deeper courses these depend on; what infinitely larger Cycle (of causes) our little Epicycle revolves on? To the minnow, every cranny and pebble, and quality and accident, of its little native Creek may have become familiar; but does the Minnow understand the Ocean tides and periodic Currents, the Trade-winds, and Monsoons, and Moon's eclipses; by all which the condition of its little Creek is regulated, and may, from time to time (*un*-miraculously enough), be quite overset and reversed? Such a minnow is Man! His creek this Planet Earth; his Ocean the immeasurable All; his Monsoons and periodic Currents, the mysterious Course of Providence from Aeons of Aeons."[69] Tennyson, again, has it:

"For Knowledge is the swallow on the lake
That sees and stirs the surface-shadow there
But never yet hath dipt into the abysm,
The Abysm of all Abysms, beneath, within
The blue of sky and sea, the green of earth,
And in the million-millionth of a grain,
Which, cleft and cleft again for evermore,
And ever vanishing, never vanishes,
To me, my son, more mystic than myself,
Or even than the Nameless is to me."[70]

The limitations of science, therefore, are imposed upon her by virtue of the infinite reality she confronts. The infinitely great and the infinitely small alike reveal the limited perceptions of science.

Astronomy speaks to us of clouds of nebulae, stars and star-clusters, so inconceivably distant, that should they this moment be annihilated, knowledge of that fact would take hundreds of thousands of years to reach this earth, travelling on the wings of light at the rate of 186,000 miles a second. Celestial phenomena, even ten million light-years distant, are sometimes today referred to by astronomical science. Are these other "universes" similar to our "universe," yet so unimaginably remote that their separate stars are indiscoverable even to the most powerful telescopes? Thus, immensities confront us which baffle the most soaring intelligences. In that infinity of space, who will dare to suggest that science has sounded the depths of possibility? Is it not in the highest degree reasonable to suppose that in that immensity there are, to quote the words of an eminent and eloquent French astronomer: "*aspects étranges, que nulle conception ayant sa source sur la Terre ne pourrait faire apparaître dans notre esprit. Qui peut douter que les éléments inconnus dont la Nature a décorée ces astres lointains: que les conditions d'existence qui caractérisent leurs planètes respectives; que le mode d'action des forces cosmiques, de la chaleur et de la lumière combinées de plusieurs soleils; que la succession mystérieuse de jours sans nuits peut-être et de saisons indécises; que la présence de plusieurs foyers électriques, la combinaison de couleurs nouvelles et inconnues, et l'association de tant d'actions simultanées ne développent à la surface de ces mondes une vaste et magnifique échelle de vie, types inimaginables pour nous, qui ne connaissons qu'un point isolé de l'univers?*" [71] In a similar spirit Mr. A. J. (now Earl) Balfour wrote: "If the current doctrine of evolution be true, we have no choice but to admit that with the great mass of natural fact we are probably brought into no sensible relation at all . . . there must be countless aspects of external nature of which we have no knowledge; of which, owing to the absence of appropriate organs, we can form no conception; which imagination cannot picture nor language express. . . . It is impossible therefore to resist the conviction that there must be an indefinite number of aspects of nature respecting which Science can never give us any information, even in our dreams. We must conceive ourselves as feeling our way about this dim corner of the illimitable world, like children in a darkened room, encompassed by we know not what; a little better endowed with the machinery of sensation than the protozoon, yet poorly provided indeed as compared with a being, if such a one could be conceived, whose senses were adequate to the infinite variety of material nature." [72]

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[69] *Sartor Resartus.* "Natural Supernaturalism."
[70] *The Ancient Sage.*

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[71] Flammarion's *La Pluralité des Mondes Habités*, pp. 203–04.

The infinitely small as well as the infinitely great suggest possibilities of being and potency undreamed of as yet. The revision of the atomic theory has made way for a conception of *matter* which makes it *material* in a very modified sense. Instead of the atom being an indivisible unit of matter, it is being regarded as a manifestation of electrical phenomena. Of radioactivity and the revolution in thought its discovery has brought only the expert is competent to speak. "The vista," says Prof. F. Soddy, which has been opened out by the discoveries of radioactivity, "is without parallel in the whole history of science." [73] If this be so, is it inadmissible to ask if there may not be sources of energy unknown at present to science, adequate for the causal explanation of some events that have been called "miracles" and so rejected?

Science then, herself recognizing her limitations in face of the infinite reality which confronts her, can no longer speak dogmatically of her "laws" as final and exhaustive formulations. If, as Huxley said, it is an aphorism that "the possibilities of Nature are infinite," it would be idle to suppose that science knows all about the *ultimate* laws of Nature. She herself is becoming more modest in her claims, more hesitant in her affirmations, less dogmatic in her denials. "The development of modern Science itself, if viewed as a whole, tends to discourage the extreme confidence, which some of its representatives feel in its assumptions. . . . What must strike anyone who has followed the most recent progress of scientific thought, is the growing uncertainty which has crept into the fundamental principles, not only of the biological but of the mechanical sciences. This contrasts very markedly with the confidence which existed half a century ago. Several highest principles, at that time looked upon as laws of nature and accepted as such by scientific authorities, have since lost their supposed validity, having been subjected to incisive and destructive criticism. With the exception of the Newtonian law of gravitation, none of these so-called first principles has with-stood the loosening effect of deepening research revealing quite unexpected phenomena. Nothing has tended more to upset older views than the discovery of formerly unknown radiations culminating in the discovery of radium."[74] Speaking of the law of gravitation, which, amid the disintegration of other scientific principles, remains, the same writer says that "it possesses two unique properties which no other formula possesses — so far as we can now see — it is universal, and it is accurate."[75] This was written in 1896; and now, even the law of gravitation seems, in the opinion of some, to be assailed by the theory of "relativity." Viscount Haldane has said that "the fundamental law of motion must . . . be of a character quite different from that of gravitation as stated by Newton"[76]; and again, that "for physics it is possible that a time may arrive when even the good old name of gravitation will not be discoverable in any respectable text-book."[77]

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[72] *Foundations of Belief*, pp. 73–76.

[73] See *The Energy of Radium*, article in *Harper's Magazine*, December, 1909.

Thus the "laws" of science seem to have no final validity. Ever and anon there are new discoveries which make past scientific formulations no longer satisfactory but merely historically interesting. They are illuminating, but only until they have led us to newer formulations. We walk by them as by the beam of a searchlight, itself stationary, which illuminates the road we have to travel. But its light fades into the distance and disappears from sight when another scientific formulation is reached; and henceforth we walk by our new illuminant, until in time it also becomes unnecessary.

This reasoning compels us to reject a scientific dogmatism which will refuse to consider anything that seems to infringe "laws." The present formulations of science are, as we have seen, valid only for our present limited knowledge. They belong themselves to the "flux" of things. Thus we are driven to see that "the uniformity of nature" is a phrase relative merely to our present knowledge. There is nothing absolute about it. It cannot be used as some irrefragable weapon with which to slay every unusual happening. It itself will break on the very facts it seeks to destroy. This has happped before and will doubtless happen again. The true scientist will resent what has been described as a "scientific absolutism which will consider nothing that seems to infringe a law." And will add: "For these laws, beyond those of mathematics, are not more than summations of experience in a certain limited here and now. The uniformity of Nature which the legalists hold over us as a sacrosanct principle is a big assumption. For who shall define its tenure in a world of aeonic flux?"[78] It is in consequence of all these changes in the formulations of science, confronted as she is by infinite reality, that Merz says: "The doctrine of the so-called 'inexorable laws of nature' requires at least the qualification that if such laws exist, they are so far as the totality of things is concerned, entirely unknown to us and likely to remain so; the known laws referring merely to restricted regions of phenomena and events."[79]

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[74] Merz, *Religion and Science*, pp. 11–12.

[75] Merz, *History of European Thought*, etc., Vol. I, p. 333.

[76] *The Reign of Relativity*, p. 101.

[77] *Ibid.*, p. 125.

But if we may so press home upon scientific dogmatism the argument which its own progress has given into our hands, we must also press it home upon a theological dogmatism which used to speak, and occasionally even now speaks, of "miracles" as violations, suspensions, abrogations, interferences. These phrases are meaningless. The same reasoning which compels the rejection of the scientific dogmatism that refuses to investigate any narrated event which seems to infringe her laws, compels also the rejection of the notion of miracle as violation of law. Before speaking of violations we shall have to have complete knowledge of the "laws" supposed to be violated. Before speaking of "interventions" we should have to be quite sure that what we call a supernatural intervention is not within the at-present unknown nature of things. And that certainty is in the nature of the case impossible.

It is therefore an utterly immodest dogmatism which would venture to speak of any event in history as a violation of law. One's very sense of the infinity of the universe should be sufficient to forbid one from daring such an assertion. To Omniscience alone would such a statement in regard to any event not be immodest. The terse and acute remarks of Kant on this point —

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[78] J. A. Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

[79] *Religion and Science*, p. 13.

and on some aspects of the miracle question there is nothing of more value than his ten pages in *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blossen Vernunft*, one of his latest works published in 1793 [80] — are well worth our recollection. All phenomena, he says, "are objected to our observation and experience; consequently, *in our eye*, they are seen as effects wrought by Nature, and are *by us* never to be otherwise judged of. The modest voice of reason calls upon us to abide within these limits, and to stray beyond this circumscribed barrier is the step of an understanding at once rash and indecorous; although I am aware, that people who appeal to preternatural explications, often pretend that they do thereby give proof of their humble and self denying spirit." [81]

Leaving this application of the discussion to the *idea of miracle* for the present, we go on to note that not only is science recognizing her limitations in view of her own revolutionary discoveries, but also, and as arising from this, she is coming to a truer view of her own functions. We have already seen how the "laws" of science are not final. They are working hypotheses, to be amended or discarded as new observations come within the scientific ken. But now it is necessary to go a step further and to say that even if these "laws," with the progress of knowledge, *did* become formulations to embrace all reality (a hypothesis which the infinite nature of reality makes in the highest degree improbable), they would be no nearer to giving us *final* explanations of the nature of things. For, let it be clearly noted, these scientific laws are after all merely *descriptive*. They are not entities existing in themselves, not external forces which cause sequences. They are merely the harmonization or the co-ordination of all observed sequences. Or, as a recent scientific writer puts it, they are "the investigator's formulae summing up regularities of recurrence." [82] Or, as another puts it; "the particular 'causal laws' are therefore simply descriptive generalisations." [83]

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[80] Eng. tr., *Theory of Religion within the Boundary of Pure Reason* (Edin., 1838).

[81] Eng. tr., p. 112.

[82] J. A. Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

[83] *The Religious Consciousness*, J. B. Pratt, p. 25.

Let us consider, in order to illustrate this contention, the law of gravitation as formulated by Newton. We are not justified in saying that that law is in any sense the *cause* of the motions of the heavenly bodies. Newton himself clearly saw that. "So far I have accounted for the phenomena presented to us by the heavens and the sea by means of the force of gravity, but I have as yet assigned no cause to this gravity . . . I have not been able to deduce from phenomena the *raison d'être* of the properties of gravity and I have not set up hypotheses." [84] Or, again, as he wrote in a letter to Bentley: "You sometimes speak of gravity as essential and inherent in matter. Pray, do not ascribe that notion to me; for the cause of gravity is what I do not pretend to know." Laplace also may be quoted from his "*Exposition du Système du Monde*" on the same point: "as to this principle (*i.e.*, gravitation) is it a primordial law of nature? Is it only a general effect of an unknown cause? Here the ignorance in which we are as to the ultimate properties of matter stops us, and removes all hope that we shall ever be able to answer these questions in a satisfactory manner." [85]

It is this truer understanding of the significance of "scientific laws" which has led to the change frequently noted in the estimate science has as to her own functions. "We must," said Boutroux, "have regard to the change which, during our own day, has been effected in the idea of Science. Only a short time ago, Science stood for absolute knowledge of the nature of things. . . . But is it incorrect to say that this conception of Science, as absolute and limitless knowledge, is not maintained, and that the science of today has become accustomed to quite another idea of her meaning?" [86] With this judgment students of the development of thought during the last two generations will cordially agree. No aspect of that development is more significant than the greater measure of understanding and sympathy accorded by science to a spiritual or idealistic philosophy of life and of the universe.[87]

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[84] I am indebted for this quotation to Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 9. (From Newton, *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, 1687.)

[85] For these last two quotations I am indebted to Merz, *History*, etc., Vol. I, p. 340 and p. 379.

[86] *Op. cit.*, p. 237.

Science, then, not only confronts an infinite universe, but is, by her very nature and functions, unable to say any final, interpretative word about it. This is not merely the claim of philosophers and metaphysicians. It is the acknowledgment of men of science themselves. Their investigations and researches confront them with questions which are incapable of answer by scientific methods. Du Bois-Reymond maintained a generation and more ago that the universe involved seven enigmas, and that of these, four are absolutely insoluble for science: (1) the essence of matter and force, (2) the origin of movement, (3) the origin of simple sensation, and (4) freewill.[88] Herbert Spencer in his autobiography told us that in his day "the ordinary scientific specialist, deeply interested in his specialty, and often displaying comparatively little interest in other departments of science, is rarely much interested in the relations between Science at large and *the great questions which lie beyond Science*." [89] In his "Reflections" at the age of 73, with which he concludes his autobiography, he says: "We find, indeed, an unreflective mood, general among both cultured and uncultured, characterised by indifference to everything beyond material interests and the superficial aspects of things. There are the millions of people who daily see sunrise and sunset without ever asking what the sun is. There are the University men, interested in linguistic criticism, to whom inquiries concerning the origin and nature of living things seem trivial. And even among men of Science there are those who, curiously examining the spectra of nebulae or calculating the masses and motions of double-stars, never pause to contemplate under other than physical aspects the immeasurably vast facts they record.

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[87] For a substantiation of this judgment in regard to France by a recent student of French thought see J. A. Gunn's *Modern French Philosophy*. He says, "Beginning with an overweening confidence in Science and a belief in determinism and in a destined progress, the century closed with a complete reversal of these conceptions. Materialism and naturalism are both recognised as inadequate, a reaction sets in against positivism and culminates in the triumph of spiritualism or idealism," p. 317.

[88] See Merz, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, pp. 598–600. See also Boutroux, *op. cit.*, p. 131 and pp. 238–39.

[89] Vol. I, p. 419.

But in both cultured and uncultured there occur lucid intervals. . . . By those who know much, more than by those who know little, is there felt the need for explanation."[90] Merz, who deals in his *History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century* with all the modes of scientific thinking, the various scientific "views of nature" — astronomical, atomic, kinetic or mechanical, physical, morphological, genetic, vitalistic, psycho-physical, and statistical — says: "in almost every instance, in following up the various aspects of scientific thought, I have had to show how they have brought us to problems which cannot be solved by the means which we call scientific or exact; and in many instances I have shown how the foremost scientific thinkers themselves have been led up to inquiries which they have variously termed philosophical, metaphysical, logical or psychological."[91]

Science therefore has come to see that she seeks to disclose the *manner* of things; she does not explain the final *reason* of things. She asks the question How, and not the question Why. Her chief end is, to use the words of modern scientists, "descriptive formulation."[92] The experience which it is her business to formulate can never take her back to the beginning of things. Nor can this experience reach final ends. Both first cause and final cause are beyond her reach. With the whole of experienced fact as her province, science is thus limited in her capacities. She must leave to philosophy the task of seeking a final interpretation of things.

For this reason it has come to be seen that science is not wedded to any mechanistic or materialistic view of the nature of things. Such views go beyond the descriptive formulation of reality which is her sphere; they are attempted interpretations of reality. As to the question of their inadequacy as philosophical interpretations, that question will arise in a later chapter. The point we make is that in virtue of the fact that these are philosophies they are in no sense *essential* to the conclusions of science. As philosophies they can be argued about, and, we believe, shown to be unsatisfactory. But they are in no sense science. For science in the ultimate sense "explains" nothing. Her endeavour is, in the secondary sense, to "explain" everything. Whether that day will come we saw reason to doubt, in consequence of the infinite reality with which science has to deal. But even if that day should come, science would not have in the ultimate sense "explained" anything. This judgment is fortified by that of Romanes. "Although science is essentially engaged in explaining, her work is necessarily confined to the sphere of natural causation; beyond that sphere (*i.e.*, the sensuous) she can explain nothing. In other words, even if she were able to explain the natural causation of everything, she would be unable to assign the ultimate *raison d'être* of anything."[93] Karl Pearson, writing in 1911, said, speaking of scientists: "Nobody believes now that Science *explains* anything; we all look upon it as a shorthand description, as an economy of thought."[94] "Science for the past is a description, for the future a belief; it is not and never has been, an explanation, if by this word is meant that science shows the *necessity* of any sequence of perceptions."[95]

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[90] Vol. II, p. 469.

[91] Vol. II, p. 744.

[92] Cf. J. A. Thomson, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

The bearing of these considerations on miracle, we trust, has been made manifest. If a reported "miracle" is explained by science, is the supernatural interpretation of event destroyed? The usually accepted view of "miracle" answers that question in the affirmative. That view had inherent in it the notion that if "secondary causes" are found "to account for" the so-called miraculous event, the supernatural idea disappears. This has been the view usually accepted both by scientists and theologians. "It may be remarked that a scientific explanation is destructive of the supernatural character of a miracle," wrote Sir W. T. Thiselton Dyer.[96] A distinguished and influential theologian of the last century, Rothe of Heidelberg, maintained the same thesis. "In the very conception of a miracle, it is understood that it is unexplainable, as it is the work of God performed without any intermediate agency: but to *explain* an event, is to point out the intermediate means between it and its causality."[97]

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[93] *Thoughts on Religion*, pp. 125–26.

[94] Preface to 3rd ed., *Grammar of Science*, p. v.

[95] *Grammar of Science*, p. 113.

[96] *Ency. Brit.*, Vol. 14, p. 20, 11th ed., Article on Huxley.

[97] *Zur Dogmatik*, Gotha, 1863, p. 100. (Cited by Steinmeyer, *The Miracles of our Lord* (Eng. tr., 1875), p. 10.)

Inherent in that attitude there are positions which we shall seek to show reasons for rejecting in Chapter V. Here it may be sufficient to state briefly the presuppositions which beget this attitude. They are:

First: That there are events known as "miracles" which can be declared as "unexplainable." The answer to that presupposition will be that *if* there are, it is impossible to declare them to be such.

Second: That to point out the sequences between events is to ascertain their "causality." The answer thereto will be that "scientific law" and "causality" are quite different categories. The confusion of these two has begotten most of the ambiguities in the age-long discussion on miracle.

Third (as arising from the second): That there are two types of causality — a "natural" and a "supernatural." The answer to that presupposition will be to ask on what grounds this distinction is based. We shall seek to maintain that it is based not on any observed or observable facts or events, but on a certain *à priori* theistic concept which is held to *require* this distinction. The question thus will be seen to resolve itself into the following: Is this *à priori* theistic concept necessary to a valid ethically-based theism? Our answer will be found to be in the negative.

This chapter may be closed by stating two conclusions to which the whole discussion has led.

First: With regard to alleged *events* which have been called "miracles," it is not competent to science to reject them wholesale on *à priori* grounds as unhistorical. A modern French writer has said: "*La science a seule autorité pour affirmer ou nier la realité d'un fait sensible ou expérimentale. L'histoire a seule qualité pour apprécier la valeur d'un témoignage et prononcer sur le fait qu'il atteste. Aussi, quand la théologie qui est d'ordre purement métaphysique, vient affirmer qu'un fait illusoire pour le savant ou l'historien est cependant réel, nul esprit sérieux ne saurait accepter une pareille prétention.*"[98] Now this assertion is true and in our judgment incontestable. Metaphysics has no right on *à priori* grounds to say that any event *must* have happened, if science and history *on adequate grounds* declare that it did not happen. But here the question comes back to what may be regarded as "adequate grounds." For neither science nor history can be always quite certain as to what is the fact-basis of every alleged event. Sometimes these studies may justifiably say: The concensus of probability is that the alleged event did not happen. Sometimes they may justifiably say: something unusual probably happened, but not the something which is alleged. But sometimes they have unjustifiably said: This alleged event certainly did not happen — when subsequent scientific and historical researches have led to the conclusion that it very probably *did* happen.

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[98] Saintyves, *Le Discernement*, etc., p. 259.

Second: Science, if true to her *descriptive* rôle, can give no final explanation or interpretation of things. When therefore she succeeds in "explaining" (in the secondary sense) events which have been called "miracles," she has not in any way ruled out the truth for which the term "supernatural" stands. With this "miraculous idea" or "supernatural idea" we deal in Chapter V where ultimate considerations are faced.

CHAPTER IV

MODERN PSYCHICAL SCIENCE AND MIRACLE
OR
MIRACLE AND THE MYSTERY OF PERSONALITY

In the last chapter we sought to elucidate the bearings of science, used in its generic sense, upon miracle. It was there maintained that since science includes all facts within its scope, events called miracles are necessarily matter for scientific investigation. The faith which inspires the endeavours of science is, as we saw, that all events are "explicable." We may express this faith otherwise by saying that the universe is rational, or by asserting that the principle of causality is co-extensive with all the phenomena of the universe. At the same time, we went on to show, this faith in the explicability of all events does not warrant science in adopting an *à priori* rejective attitude to certain alleged "miraculous" facts on the ground that no "causal explanation" has been as yet forthcoming for them. That is an attitude which would lead to the stultification of science herself; for knowledge grows from more to more, not by ruling out *à priori* in the supposed interests of scientific laws every fact which does not harmonize with these formulations, but by the patient examination of *all* events, however difficult of explanation some of them may be. Further, the infinite nature of the reality which confronts science should make her hesitant in concluding that the time will come when her formulations will be exhaustive of reality.

Leaving ultimate considerations to a later chapter, we shall here seek to suggest the bearings of modern psychological investigations upon our subject. This examination might reasonably have been included in the last chapter. For the one generic term "science" covers psychological science. The facts of psychology are as much facts for science as the motions of the heavenly bodies through space. Since, as we saw, science has to do with experience, these psychical facts given in experience come within her province. And it is the faith of science that "laws, not inexplicable miracles," will be seen in mind as well as in matter.[1] At the same time these studies have so important a bearing on the question that a separate chapter for their consideration has been felt to be necessary.

It has already been maintained that historical science is not justified in ruling out as fiction all recorded facts of history which are not subject to explanation. When historical science, acting in accord with her principles of investigation, has done her utmost, there remains a residue of "unexplained" facts which it is not in her province to deny. For frequently the event rejected as impossible has been seen in the light of later and fuller knowledge to be quite within the range of possibility. It will be part of our task in this chapter to show how the researches of modern psychical science manifest the possibility of many events in the past which have been called "miracles." It will further be our aim to show how these studies, revealing as they do hitherto hardly suspected capacities of the human personality, make it at least not improbable that some events still maintained by some scientists as impossible will one day be regarded if not as assured facts, at least as within the range of possibility.

Let us begin by the consideration of facts which are usually covered by the term "magic." In the last chapter it was shown that many of the magical beliefs of primitive men belonged to the pre-scientific stage of human development. Here, however, it is to be noted that not all magical practices can be relegated to the dust heap of credulity and fiction. This would be an exceedingly convenient way of narrowing the field of scientific investigation, and it is a method which, as is well known, has been commonly employed both by the scientist and by the theologian, both of whom have found such facts inconvenient for their formulations. While it will of course be acknowledged that naïve credulity was largely responsible, for example, for the exalted position given by the negroes to their fetish-men, by the Mongolian tribes to their shamans, by the Red Indians to their medicine-men, it is maintained here that there must have been a residue of authentic "magical" practices for these celebrities to have maintained their vogue through the unnumbered ages of the past.

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[1] Cf. Professor Caldecott in *The Modern Churchman*, September, 1920, p. 372.

Though it is extraordinarily difficult amid the widely diversified phenomena of magic to distinguish between fact and fiction, there is yet today considerable measure of agreement that these *have* a basis in fact. The day when magic and moonshine were regarded as synonymous terms has gone. Lecky says in regard to a kindred subject, witchcraft, in his *History of Rationalism* (p. 14) that, "The historical evidence establishing the reality of witchcraft is so vast and varied, that it is impossible to disbelieve it, without what, on other subjects, we should deem the most extraordinary rashness." Sir William Ramsay, speaking of the Magian of Acts 13, tells us that "No strict line could then be drawn between lawful honourable scrutinising of the secret powers of Nature, and illicit attempts to pry into them for selfish ends, between science and magic, between chemistry and alchemy, between astronomy and astrology. The two sides of investigation passed by hardly perceptible degrees into one another: and the same man might be by times a magician, by times the forerunner of Newton and Thomson (Lord Kelvin). . . . It is certain that the priests of some Eastern religions possessed very considerable knowledge of the powers and processes of nature; and that they were able to do things that either were, or seemed to be, marvellous. Which of these alternatives was true, is a point on which individual judgments will vary widely; but my own experience makes me believe that, so far as influence over human or animal nature and life was concerned, their powers were wonderful."[2] With such an expression of judgment, few versed in the subject would disagree.

In considering this difficult and perplexing subject, it is, of course, as in all kindred subjects which lie on the borderland of mystery, necessary to go warily. Especially is it necessary to hold ever clearly in mind the distinction between *facts* and *hypotheses* said to account for the facts. One may believe that there is a fact-basis for magic without of course accepting the demonology hypothesis, which has been in the past so almost universally associated with it. This association in the prescientific age was held to be essential and indissoluble. "Many phenomena," as Edmund Gurney said in the course of a long note on witchcraft, "which in their way were sufficiently genuine, were misinterpreted, because the sciences which should have explained them were still unborn."[3] A witch was regarded not merely as a person who could do more than ordinary things; she was one leagued with the powers of darkness or evil. It is interesting to remember that it was the latter belief which inspired the drastic enactments passed in all ages against witches.[4] "Thou shalt not suffer a sorceress to live" (Exodus 22 : 18) was the Mosaic enactment, which doubtless had much influence on ecclesiastical and civil law. (Cf. also Deut., 18 : 10 and I Saml., 15 : 23.) These were burned not because they had supernormal powers, but because they were believed to exercise demonic powers.[5]

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[2] *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen*, pp. 78–79.

Lecky has described with great fulness the consequences of such beliefs in the later Middle Ages.[6] A recrudescence of such beliefs in our time would be in the highest degree deplorable. The Hebrew prophets saw the evils which such practices and beliefs exerted on the national life in their day, and did not hesitate to denounce them in forcible terms. "Thy spells — the mass of thy charms, with which thou hast wearied thyself from thy youth. Thou are sick with the mass of thy counsels. Thy wisdom and knowledge! They have led thee astray." The prophet of the exile shows, as Sir. G. A. Smith says, how these things "wearied a people's intellect, stunted their enterprise, distorted their conscience."[7] It is a significant reminder of the persistence of beliefs which the age prides itself it has long outgrown, to find that the facts of so-called "spiritualism" are regarded by many today as explicable by the intervention of demons.

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[3] *Phantasms of the Living*, Vol. I, p. 179.

[4] Lecky quotes Jean Bodin ("*Démonomanie des Sorciers*," p. 252) that "the Laws of Plato, of the twelve tables, of the Consuls, of the Emperors, and of all nations and legislators — Persian, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, German, French, Italian, Spanish, English — had decreed capital penalties against sorcerers" (*History of Rationalism*, etc., Vol. I, p. 101).

[5] For numerous illustrations of the belief in the association of demons with magical practices, the reader may be referred to *A History of Magic and Experimental Science during the first thirteen centuries of our era*, by Lynn Thorndike, Macmillan, 1923. Thomas Aquinas, for example, said: "It is not true then that the magic arts are sciences, but rather they are certain fallacies of the demons"; so also Albertus Magnus affirms in his Theological *Summa* "that it is the consensus of opinion that magic is due to demons." Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 604 and p. 552.

[6] See Chap. I, *History of Rationalism.*

[7] Cf. *Book of Isaiah* in the *Expositor's Bible*, Vol. II, p. 199.

It may tentatively be suggested that whatever fact-basis there is for magic will have its explanation along the lines of psychological investigation. Those who are convinced of the "spiritistic" hypothesis will be inclined to explain them by reference to their belief in the communication of discarnate spirits. Alfred Russel Wallace, maintaining this view, said: "It is certain that witches, and the persons subject to their influence, were what are termed 'mediums,' that is, persons of the peculiar organization required for the manifestation of modern spiritual phenomena. . . . The phenomena which were formerly imputed to the direct agency of Satan, are now (in 1875) looked upon by Spiritualists as for the most part, the work of invisible intelligences very little better or worse than ourselves."[8]

In the present stage of knowledge of these phenomena it may be suggested that this "spiritistic" hypothesis to account for the facts behind magic and witchcraft is not a *necessary* one. At any rate not until the hypotheses suggested by modern psychology are found to be inadequate are we justified in turning to those of "spiritualism." Dogmatic statements at present would be out of place. At the same time the hypothesis is worthy of the most candid and careful consideration that such phenomena are "explicable" in terms of man's abnormal psychical life. "It is evident," said Bousset, maintaining this view, "that we are here dealing, not with entirely idle, baseless fantasies, and products of the imagination, but with phenomena of man's abnormal life, with religious mania, ecstasy, frenzy. We are dealing with those mysterious, and partly incomprehensible phenomena of hypnotism, suggestion and auto-suggestion; with somnambulistic states, the gift of clairvoyance, and with the unknown, mysterious, yet fruitful side of man's mental life."[9]

We have referred to these facts, to which such terms as magic, sorcery, witchcraft, etc. have been given, not as maintaining an exact parallel between them and what have been called "miracles," but as showing that phenomena of man's abnormal life are not confined to modern times. In all ages, from the earliest days of primitive man, there have been such manifestations of powers, mysterious and unexplained. Andrew Lang, in his studies in primitive religion, frequently referred to what he called "X-phenomena." That there have been such phenomena all through the ages no one acquainted with the subject is likely to deny. Only, let it be pointed out, to call such phenomena X-phenomena does not mean that they are the effect of an *unknowable* quantity, but merely of an *unknown* quantity. In these days, when such facts are receiving scientific investigation, the hypothesis is being put forward that the X will be found equal to *abnormal psychological states*.

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[8] *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, p. 23.

[9] *What is Religion?* p. 46.

We may now pass to the consideration of what have been called "*miracles of healing*."

It is a fact of striking significance, to which we have previously drawn attention, that from all ages and from all peoples there come to us stories of such works. The healing shrines of modern Roman Catholic countries have had their parallels in Ancient Egypt, Greece, Rome, India, and indeed in most countries of the world.

Among the Ancient Egyptians the belief in the possibility of "*healing miracles*" was fairly general. In spite of their high proficiency in medical science, a fact which is evidenced by Homer, Diodorus, Herodotus, and Pliny,[10] they did not hesitate to resort to shrines when the skill of the physician had failed. Authorities tell us that they recognized three types of medical specialists: "*Le premier est le médicin ordinaire, le troisième est le sorcier, le charmeur, le diseur de charmes . . . le second prêtre de Sokhit, exorciseur.*"[11] Egypt had sanctuaries which in their own day were as famous as such shrines as those at Lourdes and St. Anne de Beaupré are today. Abydos in Upper Egypt, where the head of Osiris was supposed to be buried and which had "a sanctity possessed by no other place in Egypt,"[12] Busiris, where there was a large temple consecrated to Isis, and Memphis[13] were but a few of such centres. Pilgrims flocked to the shrines at such centres, and when cures were effected models of the healed parts of the body were suspended from the walls in precisely similar fashion to the ex-voto customs in many Roman Catholic countries today. The innumerable crutches which the traveller sees at Lourdes are a parallel to the replicas of ears, eyes, mis-shapen limbs which were dedicated by the Ancient Egyptians to their healing divinities.[14] These shrines had their curators who, we are told, occasionally visited different parts of the country carrying the banners of their respective deities, "and the credulity of the peasants being frequently induced to solicit their aid, and to barter the doubtful assistance of the god for the real rewards lavished on his artful servants, much money was collected by them. And so profitable was it, that neither the change of religion, nor the simplicity of Islam, have been able to discard the custom; and the guardians of the Sheikhs's tombs in like manner send their emissaries with flags and drums to different parts of the country to levy contributions from the credulous in return for the promised assistance of their *wellee*, or patron saint."[15] Some of the shrines of Egypt, though the religion with which they are associated has changed, do not cease to be regarded as the scene of "healing miracles." An interesting example is referred to by Maspéro in *Études de Mythologie et d'Archéologie Égyptiennes* (Paris, 1893, Vol. II, pp. 402 ff.) on *La déesse Miritskro et ses guérisons miraculeuses*. He concludes by saying: "*L'être qui exécutait les miracles a changé de religion et de nature selon les temps, et s'est fait chrétien, puis musulman, mais ses pouvoirs lui sont restés, et la croyance aux prodiges qu'il accomplissait a persisté jusqu'à nous.*"[16]

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[10] See *The Dawn of Civilization*, Maspéro, English translation of "*Les Origines*" (1894), pp. 215ff. Also *History of Ancient Egypt*, Rawlinson, 2 volumes, 1881, Vol. I, pp. 305–06, 527–28. Also *The Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians*, Sir J. G. Wilkinson, 3 volumes, 1878. Vol. II, pp. 354–59.

[11] Maspéro in Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology, Vol. III, November, 1890–June, 1891, p. 501.

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[12] Cf. *A History of Egypt*, Breasted (1919), p. 172.

[13] See *Le Sérapeum de Memphis*, by Auguste Mariette-Pascha, publié par Maspéro (Paris, 1882).

[14] Cf. Wilkinson, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 358, for reproductions of Egyptian ex-votos.

[15] Wilkinson, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 357. For the beliefs of modern Copts, both Moslem and Christian, see *Modern Sons of the Pharaohs*, Leeder, 1918, Chap. 10 on "The Marvels of the Saints-Tombs and their birthday fairs," also p. 221, etc.

[16] *Op. cit.*, p. 410.

Among the Greeks and Romans "Healing miracles" were as commonly expected as they are in some European countries today. Healing was accomplished sometimes by 'caressing spells,' sometimes by 'kindly potions,' sometimes by surgery.[17] Asklepios was chief among their healing divinities. "Thou, Asklepios, art born to become a great solace to all mortals" was the prophecy of the Delphic Sibyl, and without doubt this prophecy was largely fulfilled as far as both the ancient Greeks and Romans were concerned. The shrines at Epidauros and Athens were visited by the sick from every deme in Greece. Rome borrowed the worship of Asklepios from Greece and erected on the Tiber Island at Rome a temple to which the sick could come for cure. That they in many cases experienced cure is evidenced by the discovery in numerous cases of the *stelae* of inscriptions containing lists of such. The fame of these temples, to which there is abundant testimony, arose from the faith of the people in the healing power of Asklepios. And that this faith received some justification in experience there can be no reasonable doubt. "This faith must have arisen from experience, and been tested by experience, and is in itself the best evidence that practical assistance was received at Epidauros by those who appealed to the god."[18] In the list of cures discovered at Epidauros there are cases of blindness, of dumbness, of paralysis, of lameness, of malignant sores, of consumption, and indeed of all the types of human ills whose "miraculous" cure is reported in our own times.[19] Those who were healed offered sacrifice, and hung up on the walls the same kind of votive tablets which adorn modern healing shrines. Replicas of arms, legs, breasts, carved out of different materials, were also placed within the sacred inclosure, silent thanksgiving testimonies to the parts of the body cured.[20]

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[17] See Pindar, *Pythian Odes*, III, 51.

[18] *Incubation or the Cure of Disease in Pagan Temples and Christian Churches*, Mary Hamilton (1906), p. 13.

[19] Mary Hamilton, *op. cit.*, pp. 17ff. Cf. the following record of the cure of blindness inscribed on a marble tablet some time after 138 A.D. at the temple of Asklepios on the island in the Tiber at Rome: "To Valerius Aper, a blind soldier, the god revealed that he should go and take blood of a white cock, together with honey, and rub them into an eye salve and anoint his eyes three days. And he received his sight and came and gave thanks publicly to the god." (See Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, p. 132.)

Among the Hindus the belief in "healing miracles" is very widespread. Associated with temple cures of India, there is doubtless much of deceit on the part of the priests and abounding credulity on the part of the people. At the same time the belief that "miracles of healing" can be accomplished continues, and it is hard to believe that there is no substance of fact which priestly deceit can use to play upon the credulous and superstitious minds of the people. According to the priests of India, write Dubois and Beauchamp, "nothing can equal the miracles which are daily wrought by the gods of their particular temple in favour of those persons who put their trust in him and make them presents. Sometimes it is a barren woman who has ceased to be so, a blind man to whom the faculty of sight has been restored, a leper who has been cured, a cripple who has recovered the use of his legs."[21] The Brahmins, say the same writers, can perform miracles "suitable for every disease."[22] Benares, the sacred city, is reputed as a centre not merely for spiritual but also for physical healing. Here, as it has been said, "high-caste and low-caste, Brahmin and Sudra, bathe side by side, for the holy Ganges, descending from heaven and falling over Shiva's brow, not only effaces caste distinctions, but affords a panacea for most of the ills, bodily and spiritual, which afflict the distressed Hindu."[23] Among the Sikhs the *Pool of Immortality*, which mirrors the Golden Temple at Amritsar, is the reputed scene of many "healing miracles." The most notable "miracle" associated with this sacred sheet of water is connected with the history of the fourth guru of their sect, Guru Ram Das (A.D. 1574–1581). Here can be seen a brass plate with a picture in relief of the famous miracle.[24] There are four healing sanctuaries in North India consecrated to the Hindu god, Dat-tat-riya, in whose name "miracles of healing" are held to be regularly accomplished at the present day.[25]

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[20] On the whole subject of Incubation consult Mary Hamilton, *op. cit.* See also the following: "The Cult of Asklepios," Alice Walton, in the *Cornell Studies in Classical Philology*, Ithaca, New York, 1894. *The Temples and Ritual of Asklepios at Epidauros and Athens*, Richard Caton (2nd ed., 1900), with valuable list of authorities there cited (pp. 47–49). *Greek Votive Offerings*, W. H. Denham Rouse (1902). *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, Jane E. Harrison (1903), pp. 341–50 on "Asklepios and the Heroes of Healing." For the temple at Epidauros see Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, tr. by J. G. Frazer, Vol. I, Book II, Chaps. 26–27. It is interesting to note that Origen utilizes Celsus' belief in Aesculapian healings as an argument for the credibility of the Christian healings. (See *Contra Celsum*, Book III, Chap. 24.)

[21] *Hindu Manners, Customs, and Ceremonies* (3rd ed., 1906), p. 576.

[22] *Op. cit.*, p. 592.

[23] *Benares, the Sacred City*, E. B. Havell (1905).

Among Buddhists healing magic is a familiar phenomenon. It has been said that "Amongst the Buddhist fraternity the highest ambition in real life is not the attainment of Nirvana, but the acquirement of magical powers. This is believed by all Buddhists of every land — whether of Burma, Ceylon, or Tibet, — to be actually possible to any man with sufficient learning and earnestness of purpose." [26] In point of practice the healing of diseases is closely associated with the religion of the people. In Tibet, for example, in case of serious or severe illness it is usual to resort to a *Ge-she* or man of reputed learning, or else to the head of a monastery.[27] A certain modicum of cures doubtless sustains the credulity of the sick.

In early Zoroastrianism the healing of diseases is closely associated with religion. The sicknesses which afflict humanity, like all other evils, have their source in Ahriman, their creator. The Vendidad tells us how he countered the creation by Ormazd of all good and beautiful things by letting loose on the earth 99,999 diseases which he had created.[28] Against this terrible host there is a divine protector, Airyaman. The Vendidad also distinguishes between three types of healers, "one who heals with the knife, one who heals with herbs, and one who heals with the Holy Word" (that is, with sacred spells), and asserts the superiority of the third of these: "For this one is the best-healing of all healers, who heals with the Holy Word; and he will best drive away sickness from the body of the faithful." [29]

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[24] See *Brahmins, Theists, and Muslims of India*, J. C. Oman (1907), pp. 258 ff. Also *Cults, Customs, and Superstitions of India*, by the same author (1908), pp. 97 ff.

[25] See Article, "Andambar: Une Lourdes Hindoue," Byramji Hormusji in *Annales des Sciences Psychiques* (September–October, 1908), pp. 302 ff. For a complete list of the religious fairs and pilgrimages in Maharashtra see *The Hindu Religious Year*, M. M. Underhill (Calcutta, 1921), Chap. 8. For healing practices in ancient India see *La Magie dans l'Inde Antique*, Prof. Victor Henry (Paris, 1909,) especially Chap. 8 on "Charmes Curatifs."

[26] *Tibet and the Tibetans*, Graham Sandberg (1906), p. 273.

[27] Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 275. Chapter 14 deals with "The Practice of Magic and Sorcery in Tibet."

[28] Fargard XXII (S. B. E., Vol. 4, pp. 236 ff.)

Among far Eastern peoples the healing of diseases has at various times been regarded as a prerogative of the priests. In old Japan, for example, priests performed the double function of priest and doctor.[30] In the Japan of recent times among the agencies that are held to insure health among the credulous and superstitious are indulgence-boxes brought back from pilgrimages to Ise, strips of paper containing prayers in unknown characters purchased from the priests, and other amulets.[31] The Chinese likewise have centres for pilgrimage like most other peoples in the world. The devotees have the same faith in the miracle-healing power of their gods as among the nations to which we have already referred. "Miraculous tombs" exist in China as elsewhere and most of the paraphernalia with which Western nations are familiar for relieving the numerous pilgrims of their money are there in evidence.[32]

In Muhammadan countries there are similar customs and beliefs. Islam has her shrines like all other faiths, to which the sick pilgrimage in hope of cure. The saints of Islam are invoked by Moslems for the healing which they are held to give. Besides the famous shrines, such as the tomb of Muhammad at Medina, that of Husein at Kerbela, that of Ali al-Rida the eighth Imam at Meshed, there are numerous others of lesser note. In Northern Africa for example there are many tombs of Moslem saints which are centres of veneration and healing.[33]

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[29] Fargard VII *b.* (S. B. E., Vol. 4, p. 87). On the subject of healing in early Zoroastrianism see *Le Parsisme*, Prof. Victor Henry (Paris, 1905), Chap. 7, on "*Magie et Médicine.*"

[30] See *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, Vol. 12, 1885. *Notes on the History of Medical Progress in Japan*, Dr. W. N. Whitney, p. 262.

[31] See Hildreth's *Japan as It Was and Is* (London ed., 1907, 2 vols.), Chaps. 31 and 33.

[32] See especially the two large volumes in French of Dr. J. J. M. De Groot entitled *Les Fêtes Annuellement Célebrées à Emoui* (*Amoy*) (*Annales de Musée Guimet*, Paris, 1886).

[33] Reference may be made to the works of Col. C. Trumelet, *Les Saints de l'Islam Légendes Hagiologiques et Croyances Algériennes* (Paris, 1881) and *L'Algérie Légendaire en Pèlerinage ça et là aux Tombeaux des principaux thaumaturges de l'Islam* (Alger, 1892).

The account of such healing beliefs might well be extended to embrace every people in the world. Everywhere and at all times these healing works have been known. The healing gods vary, but the deep-rooted instincts of humanity revealed are the same. All these divinities only cease to cure when men cease to believe in them.[34]

Alongside these, reference should also be made to works of healing from early Christian times. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Founder of the Church, is commonly called the Great Physician. This title, not found in the New Testament, has by a right instinct been given to Him, Who in the days of His flesh, went about doing good, ministering to the needs of men, healing their infirmities of body, mind, and soul. In apostolic and sub-apostolic times, His followers carried on a similar ministry of healing. The promises which He made to them (Luke, 9 : 1, and 10, etc.) were fulfilled. There is abundant evidence in the New Testament for the fact that the apostles performed works of healing.[35] The works which their Lord did, they did also. Further, the fathers of the second and third centuries bear witness to the fact that such a healing ministry continued — whatever be the explanation afforded of that ministry. Justin Martyr says in his *Second Apology*, that there were Christians in his day who "in the name of Jesus Christ have healed and do heal." [36] Irenaeus speaks of those who "cure by the imposition of hands and restore to health those who have some malady"; and one of his arguments against the Gnostics is that they cannot cure the weak or the lame or the paralytic as the Church can.[37] Tertullian relates how Septimus Severus had been cured of a grave malady by a Christian, who, in accordance with the precept of James, had prayed with him and anointed him with oil, and that, as a reward, the Emperor had given him lodging in his palace to the end of his life.[38] In the seventh canon of the Council of Carthage (256 A.D.) is found the earliest record of an order of exorcists. "When they are ordained they receive from the hand of the Bishop a little book in which the exorcisms are written, receiving power to lay hands on the *energumeni*, whether baptised or catechumens." The existence of such an order, a curious survival of which is found in the office of Exorcist in the Roman Church, while it reveals what is generally today held to be a mistaken philosophy of disease, proves clearly that the Church believed that works of healing were within her province and power. Origen also spoke of the performance of many cures by Christians in his day, cures which, as he said, 'we ourselves have witnessed.'[39] Ambrose likewise testifies to healings. He records the case of a blind man who himself declared "that when he touched the border of the garment with which the martyrs' bodies were clothed, his sight was restored to him."[40] Augustine also may be cited as bearing witness to the "gift of healing" in the early centuries of the Church.[41] These are but a few illustrations to which very many might be added. There is no reasonable room for doubt but that the Church of the early centuries continued the healing ministry of the Apostolic Age.[42]

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[34] For stories of healings from different ages and peoples see, in addition to the authorities for respective countries and faiths, *The History of Magic*, Joseph Ennemoser (tr. by Wm. Howitt, 2 vols., 1854). Charcot's article, "The Faith Cure" in the *New Review*, January, 1893. Saintyves, *op. cit.*, *Le Discernment*, etc. (Chap. on "Les Miracles de Guérison dans toutes les Religions," Part II, Chap. 3.) *Faith Healing and Christian Science*, A. Fielding. *La Genèse des Miracles*, Félix Regnault.

[35] Cf. The Acts, I Cor., 12 : 9–10 and 28–30, II Cor., 12 : 11–12, Romans, 15 : 18–19, etc.

[36] See *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, Vol. II, pp. 76–77. See also in the same volume Dialogue with Trypho, Chapters 30, 39, 85, for further illustrations.

[37] *Contra Haeres.*, Book II, Chap. 31. (See *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, Vol. V, p. 241).

From different ages of the Church after those early centuries come stories innumerable of healing works.[43] Many of the great saints were held to have performed them, though chiefly, let it be noted, after their death. Throughout the Middle Ages in our own country, as in other countries of Europe, shrines, images, wells abounded, to which the sick and the afflicted pilgrimaged in faith of a cure.[44] There is still in England today a reminder of such days in the Pilgrims Way, along which the sick pilgrimaged in the Middle Ages from Winchester to Canterbury. It used to be said by St. Thomas à Becket's biographers that he could boast of more acts of healing than any other saint. And doubtless his shrine at Canterbury witnessed an astonishing number of cures.[45] There were, however, many other pilgrimage centres in medieval England, forgotten today by all but medievalists. These had no Chaucer to perpetuate their fame. At one time there was a Windsor pilgrimage, as much a national institution as the Canterbury pilgrimage. There, through the claimed intervention of King Henry VI, numerous "healing miracles" were reported to have occurred.[46]

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[38] *Ad Scapulam*, Chap. 4. (See *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, Vol. XI, p. 50.)

[39] See *Contra Celsum*, Book I, Chap. 46; Book II, Chap. 8; and Book III, Chap. 24.

[40] See *The Letters of S. Ambrose* (Pusey's *Library of the Fathers*), Letters 22, 17.

[41] See *De Civ. dei*, Book XVIII, Chaps. 8 and 10; Book XXI, Chap. 8.

[42] Cf. *The Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism*, Uhlhorn, p. 169.

[43] For a very full account of the practice of anointing the sick with oil in the history of the church, see *Anointing of the Sick in Scripture and Tradition*, F. Puller.

[44] Cf. Article, "Pilgrimage" in *Ency. Brit.*

In Reformation times, healing works reappeared among the Moravians and Waldenses. Cures are reported of Luther and other reformers. The Huguenots of France, also, cultivated the gift of healing. In the seventeenth century in our own country the Baptists, Quakers, and other Puritan sects practised "faith cures." George Fox, the founder of the Quakers, narrates many healing wonders in his *Journal*. A name familiar to students of the history of the subject is that of Valentine Greatrakes, an Irish churchman who in the seventeenth century performed numerous marvellous cures. A record of his healing works is found in his own little book *A Brief Account of Mr. Valentine Greatrak's and Divers of the Strange Cures by Him lately Performed* (London, 1666). This book was a reply to *Wonders no Miracles*, an anonymous attack by a clergyman upon Greatrakes. In the eighteenth century John Wesley knew something of such works.[47] The nineteenth-century Irvingite *Miracles of Healing* (1830) may also be referred to, of which F. D. Maurice made acknowledgment that they had "never yet been accounted for." [48]

Reference may also be made to "The King's Evil." This was the old name given to scrofula, through the one-time widespread belief that its cure was possible by the King's touch. The monarchs of both England and France were held to possess this gift. Shakespeare in *Macbeth*, Act 4, Scene 1, and Evelyn in his *Diary* (July 6th, 1660) both give to us accounts of the ceremony connected with the touching. Charles II is stated on good authority to have touched over 100,000 persons. The practice continued until the time of Queen Anne, to whom Samuel Johnson was brought in infancy.[49]

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[45] See *St. Thomas of Canterbury, His Death and Miracles* (2 vols., London, 1898), E. A. Abbott.

[46] See *The Miracles of King Henry VI* — a translation from the MS. in the British Museum with introductions by Father Ronald Knox and Shane Leslie (Cambridge, 1923).

[47] Cf. His *Journal* for 26 Dec. 1761, and 16th Oct. 1788.

[48] Cf. His *Life*, by his son, Vol. I, p. 116.

Stories of such healing works might be indefinitely multiplied. The records of early Jesuit missionaries afford illustrations of interest to the student of the subject. Acosta, the sixteenth-century Spanish Jesuit missionary to Peru and Mexico, whose *Natural and Moral History of the Indies* is one of the leading authorities on these ancient civilizations, has a chapter of interest to the student of "healing miracles" entitled "Of some miracles which God hath showed at the Indies, in favour of the faith, beyond the desert of those that wrought them." *Inter alia* he records how the early European travellers in Florida performed healing miracles in order to save their own lives. "These Barbarians did force them to cure certaine diseases, threatening them with death if they did it not; they being ignorant in any part of phisicke and having nothing to apply, forced by necessitie, made Evangelicall medicines, saying the praiers of the Church, and making the signe of the Crosse, by meanes whereof they cured these diseases, which made them so famous, as they were forced to exercise this office in all townes as they passed, which were innumerable, wherein our Lord did aide them miraculously, and they themselves were thereat amazed, being but of an ordinarie life." [50]

In our own times, besides the greater centres of pilgrimage, there are very numerous shrines of healing in most European countries. Corrèze, Rocamadour, Le Puy, La Salette in France,[51] Treves in Prussia, where is the traditional "Holy Coat," the seamless robe of the Crucified Christ, Kevelaer in North West

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[49] Cf. also Pepys under June 23, 1660, and April 13, 1661; also Chambers, *Book of Days* (1888), I, pp. 82–85, gives a long account of the practice. The Service appeared in the Prayer Book up to 1719.

[50] See *The Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, Father Joseph De Acosta (Hakluyt Society ed. London, 1880, 2 vols.), Vol. II, p. 525.

[51] See *Le Miracle en France au 19me. Siècle*, A. Loth (Lille, 1894).

Germany, Luxembourg, in whose cathedral is the wonder-working Maria Consolatrix, Holywell in North Wales — these are but a few of such. Russia also has her shrines visited by pilgrims from near and far. One of the most famous of these is at Kieff, famous for its catacombs and for the "miracle working" ikon of the Death of Our Lady. Hither sick pilgrims journey annually in great numbers in search of cure.[52] The American Continent likewise has its miracle-working shrines, most famous of which is at St. Anne de Beaupré on the north shore of the St. Lawrence. Here St. Anne, the Mother of Mary, is worshipped, and in return grants, it is believed by French-Canadians, miraculous healing to the sick.[53]

The stories of healing works effected at Lourdes are of course familiar to all. And that these stories are not a mass of lying inventions is obvious to all who have given any consideration to the subject. The trains which at certain seasons of the year go rolling towards Lourdes from different parts of France, with their freight of "the halt, the lame and the blind," of those "afflicted with divers diseases," bear some few who are to find healing at the sacred grotto. The explanation of these cures is of course *tout autre chose.* But undue scepticism as to the facts is not warranted. The *Bureau de Constatations* at Lourdes is sufficiently trustworthy to compel acknowledgment that there is a considerable basis in fact for many of the stories of healing reported. While its function is a more modest one than is sometimes claimed for it by over-zealous Roman Catholics,[54] sufficient evidence is available to demand the serious attention of even the most sceptical of medical scientists or the most dubious of Protestants.[55]

Reference may also be briefly made to modern healing cults, such as Christian Science, and to such sects as the Mormons in America and the Peculiar People in England. It is not necessary here to emphasize the inadequate philosophy and theology which is behind the teachings of many of these cults. It is sufficient for our purpose to note that there is here again some basis in fact for the stories of "faith cures" which come to us from time to time. As to the precise nature of the facts, that is matter for the investigation of medical science. Yet sufficient evidence is forthcoming to show that cures are frequently performed by such means.[56]

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[52] Cf., *e.g.*, *Russia, Travels and Studies*, Annette M. B. Meakin (1906), Chap. 29.

[53] On the St. Anne de Beaupré healings, see Article, "Miracles in French Canada," in *The Popular Science Monthly*, Vol. 48, pp. 234 ff.

[54] Cf. *La Stigmatisation, l'Extase Divine et les Miracles de Lourdes*, Imbert-Gourbeyre (Paris, 1894), Vol. II, p. 493. Speaking of Voltaire's words about the necessity, before believing in miracles, of having one accomplished in the presence of scientists in Paris, he says: "*Le souhait de Voltaire a été realisé à Lourdes*"!

[55] Cf. Article in Proceedings of the S. P. R., Vol. 9, by Dr. A. T. and Mr. F. W. H. Myers on "Mind-Cure, Faith-Cure, and the Miracles of Lourdes."

Now the question at once arises, How have all these facts to be regarded? These ancient and modern instances of works of healing by means other than those employed by ordinary medical science, have they any common denominator? In other words, do they all come within the same category? Further, are they capable of scientific explanation? Are they explicable by "Law"? The answers to these questions lead us from the realm of the facts to that of hypotheses to account for the facts. We shall bear in mind the distinction we have already referred to between the facts and the various explanations given to account for those facts. Our apology for the emphasis on this distinction is that it is one which the human mind so frequently and unconsciously obliterates. One of the chief reasons, indeed the main reason, why many of the facts to which we have alluded have been brushed aside as unworthy of consideration is because they have been associated in the mind with the superstitious theories so frequently maintained to account for them. Even Science herself, in spite of this essentially scientific distinction, has frequently refused to consider facts because of an unscientific association of them with the theories held by the superstitious in conjunction with them. Science has so often forgotten her own first principles, and refused to acknowledge or even to investigate facts by virtue of unconsciously accepting the unscientific man's confused combination of fact and theory.

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[56] The whole matter of the duty of the Christian Church in regard to this subject is receiving considerable attention. The Emmanuel Church movement in Boston brought the subject prominently before the church. An international society known as the Guild of Health has been formed for the study of the relation between Religion and Bodily Health with prominent leaders of the Church as patrons. Cf. *Spiritual Healing* by H. Anson, 1923. Cf. also The Lambeth Conference Report recently issued under the title *The Ministry of Healing*, 1924.

Let us illustrate this confusion. In reply to the claim that a case of paralysis has been cured by the virtue of some sacred relic, a Thorn of the Holy Crown of Thorns let us say, so frequently it has been said, or if not said at least implied: "Nonsense! Beside which that Thorn is a spurious relic. If we were to believe in the genuineness of every Thorn claimed to have been part of the Crown of Thorns Christ wore at Golgotha, we should have to believe that there were a thousand such Crowns." The fact of the paralysis having been cured is rejected because of an inability to accept the only "explanation" that presented itself to the credulous medieval mind. Scepticism as to the genuineness of the relic leads to scepticism as to the cure alleged to have resulted through "faith" in it. Now, this latter scepticism is a *non sequitur* from the former scepticism. And it results from an implicit unscientific acknowledgment of the necessary connection between the fact and the theory held in unscientific times to account for it. Or, to give another illustration of this confusion, it is believed by primitive peoples that the magical practices of their medicine-men cure, in many cases, physical ills. The answer to this belief on the part of the educated European frequently is: "Primitive man's diseases are not caused by demons; therefore there is no substance in fact for his belief that his ills are cured by magical practices." Here again, we find that scepticism as to the theory behind the magical practices which are regarded as the "cause" of the cure leads to scepticism as to the cure itself. Now that in many cases this scepticism is justified it is far from our purpose to deny. But that *in all cases* it is justified, it is part of our purpose to refute. Cures do take place by the "magical practices" of primitive man.[57] It is unfortunate that in the majority of cases travellers in uncivilized lands are so governed by the notion of the superstitious theory behind magical practices that they have not troubled to inquire carefully into the question whether real cures are effected thus or no. And this attitude has, again, been begotten of the idea that only such cures are historically reliable which are claimed to result from theories in which the scientific intellect can believe; the point being usually forgotten that the thing which matters is not what the educated European believes but what the sick savage believes.

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[57] It may suffice to give the report of a very recent observer to substantiate this statement. See the cases of cure among the Nashi, an aboriginal tribe in Yünnan province of China, reported in the *National Geographic Magazine*, November, 1924.

In seeking to ascertain a valid hypothesis which will account for the facts of healing to which we have drawn attention, it is of the utmost importance that we have a proper understanding of the *cause* of the diseases cured. In referring to Magic, we maintained that an acceptance of a fact-basis for some of the alleged phenomena did not carry with it an acceptance of the demonology hypothesis. It must here be noted that the acceptance or rejection of this "demon theory" of disease will have very considerable bearing on the theory set forth to account for such healing works. For if a demon, or demons, is the cause of the trouble, the theory set forth to account for the cure will obviously include a power adequate to their expulsion. Or, we may say, putting it more popularly, if the cause of the disease is "supernatural," the cure of the disease must be no less so. It is therefore of importance to see how it stands with this theory.

It is a fact familiar to all students of anthropology that among savage peoples the demonic theory of disease is universally held. Primitive man lived in a state of perpetual dread. The spirits which filled his world are ever ready to seize hold of him, bringing some fell disease in their train. Tylor's *Primitive Culture* speaks of "The savage theory of demonical possession and obsession which has been for ages, and still remains, the dominant theory of disease and inspiration among the lower races." He affords numerous illustrations of this contention.[58]

Among the natives of Sarawak and North Borneo the theory of sickness is "either that it is caused by the presence of evil spirits in the patient's body, or that it has been struck by one of them, or that one of them has been and enticed his soul out of his body. To expel *Hantu* from the human body, and to be able to see a vagrant soul, and then rescue it from the greedy clutches of the malignant spirits — in these things consists the perfection of the healing art."[59]

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[58] Cf. Vol. II, p. 124 (3rd ed., 1891).

Spencer and Gillen tell us that among the native tribes of Central Australia death is regarded not as an event caused naturally, but as caused by the demonic or magical influences of others. "No such thing as natural death is realised by the natives; a man who dies has of necessity been killed by some other man, or perhaps even by a woman, and sooner or later that man or woman will be attacked."[60] This obviously involves the frequent doubling of the natural death rate! On mere humanitarian grounds, therefore, it is desirable that this theory of disease held by primitive people should go!

This theory of disease has maintained its hold very tenaciously, even among civilized peoples. The New Testament witnesses to its partial acceptance by the Primitive Church. Harnack in *The Expansion of Christianity* says that in the early Church "the whole world and the circumambient atmosphere were filled with devils; not merely idolatry, but every phase and form of life were ruled by them."[61] Even today it may safely be said that the majority of people in the world accept this demonic explanation of their diseases. And many who, for the majority of diseases, accept the findings of medical science, yet for such troubles as epilepsy, hysteria, etc., incline to the demonic theory. It is interesting to note that the very word *epilepsy* (Greek, ἐπίληψις, seizure) remains to testify to the belief. Such a term again as nightmare (A.S. *maer*, spirit, elf) preserves a record of this belief.

It may safely be asserted that the progress of science has tended to the total discredit of the demonic theory of human diseases. The belief in demon possession dies out as education spreads. The countries today where its hold is most tenacious are those outside the influences of Christianity. And it is a significant fact that as Christianity spreads to these peoples their belief in demonic influences loses its hold upon them. Missionaries to uncivilized peoples carry with them this message among others — that we are not haunted by spirits who ever seek to do us bodily harm. And it is their universal testimony that one of the greatest blessings which Christianity brings to such races is the lifting from their minds of the dread burden of this fear. We are not here seeking to reject the belief that evil spirits exist: we are seeking to show that they do not cause our human ills. Modern knowledge is not in a position to deny the existence of "principalities and powers." But what it does assert is that certain diseases at one time almost universally held as "caused" by demons and spirits are capable of a natural or scientific explanation. The disorders regarded in biblical as in other times as caused by demon-possession are interpreted today "in the light of modern psychological medicine." [62]

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[59] See *The Natives of Sarawak and British North Borneo,* H. Ling Roth (2 vols., 1896), Vol. I, p. 260.

[60] *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* (1899), p. 48. On Demonology see also Wundt, *Elements of Folk Psychology* (Eng. tr., 1915), pp. 75 ff.

[61] Vol. I, p. 161.

If this be so, does it not follow that any expulsion-of-demons theory held to account for the works of healing to which we have referred is discredited? If demons do not cause the troubles, they have not to be reckoned with in the cure. A theory, then, which necessitates a "supernatural" power adequate to the expulsion of "supernatural" demons must be rejected. It involves a spurious supernaturalism. It is a relic of the theories associated with magic, sorcery, witchcraft.

The question naturally arises at this point: If diseases are "natural" which at one time were considered "supernatural" may not the cure of such be "natural" which were previously considered "supernatural"? If these diseases are now proved to be capable of scientific diagnosis, may not the cures also be scientifically explicable? Or, if we are to retain the term "supernatural" in connection with such cures, it must surely be used in a sense very different from its original employment.

In considering this question of "healing miracles" it must be remembered that we are dealing with facts belonging to all ages and all peoples. In stating this we do not wish to assert that the diseases cured by our Lord, as recorded in the Gospels, are necessarily of the same character as those cured in different ages before and since His time. But in any examination of these works of healing it must be borne constantly in mind that we are dealing

[62] *Religion and Medicine*, Drs. Worcester, McComb, and Coriat (1908), p. 357.

not with phenomena confined to one era, to one person, and to one creed, but to various eras, to various persons, and to various creeds.

This consideration will evacuate the application of the term "miracle" to these works of its customary significance. They cannot be regarded as "evidential," in the sense in which that word has been employed in regard to "miracles." They do not substantiate the truth of any doctrine held by those who perform such works. Otherwise we should be driven to the conclusion that divergent and irreconcilable doctrines have been "miraculously" evidenced — a notion which is on the face of it absurd.

An examination of the facts themselves will lead us to the same conclusion. When we consider the varied accounts of such works of healing, we instinctively ask ourselves if there is any antecedent universally found to be present in such cases (cf. J. S. Mill's Definition of a Miracle). The tentative answer of science to this question is that there is, and that the antecedent is the "faith" of the cured person. In all cases of such healings the quality called "faith" seems to be an indispensable requisite. Whether we are considering the healings of non-Christian religions, the healings of Church history, or modern cures effected at such places as Lourdes and St. Anne de Beaupré, or by cults such as Christian Science, the "faith" of the patient seems to be essential. The words of Lecky are true in quite another sense from that which he had in mind. "Miracles cease when men cease to believe and to expect them." [63] These words, meant by Lecky to throw discredit upon all "miracles," may today be regarded as a quite fairly sound scientific assertion as to the healing potency of "faith." These healings do indeed cease when people cease to have faith in their possibility. Healing shrines, at one time the witnesses of remarkable cures, which today are neglected or forgotten, are not only, as Lecky would have held, a reminder of the facility with which marvellous events are invented or come to be believed in. Doubtless in part they are that. But they are also a testimony to the healings possible to "faith." These neglected shrines have ceased to witness cures because no longer do they awaken that eager expectation of which the traveller is so vividly conscious at modern shrines such as Lourdes. Scientific knowledge gradually undermines the belief in the *objects* of the faith associated with these shrines: with the result that faith, regarded in itself, no longer is operatively awakened. At St. Anne de Beaupré, for example, it has been noted that since 1860, when the New England factories attracted the peasants of French Canada and new ideas began to be absorbed by the people, fewer and less striking cures are claimed as having happened. St. Anne has become "comparatively listless," and only cures minor ailments such as headaches.[64] The time will doubtless come when Lourdes itself, in spite of all the paraphernalia of miracle-suggestiveness associated with the place, will cease to awaken the popular faith and so will cease to be regarded by orthodox Roman Catholics as "the greatest supernatural event in the world." [65]

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[63] *History of European Morals*, Vol. I, p. 373.

What then, we are compelled to go on to ask, is this "faith," and what light does it throw on this question of works of healing?

A clear distinction must be made between the faith in itself and that towards which the faith is directed. A failure to make this distinction has resulted in many of the superstitious conceptions of "miracle" which have been held in past ages, and, indeed, are still widely held.

In the case of modern pilgrims to such shrines as Lourdes it is possible and indeed necessary to distinguish between two sentiments which inspire their pathetic journey. On the one hand is the quest for life, that instinct which survives the slow decay of the physical powers and which leaps up at times to grasp the faintest hope of cure. On the other hand is the belief in the Virgin and her "miraculous" powers. The pilgrims have heard how she has effected marvellous cures, perhaps even upon some from their own parish. A pilgrimage is being organized. If others have been cured, then why not they? Their faith in Our Lady lays hold upon the ebbing powers of life, and quickens them into the energy of hope and endeavour. They decide to join the pilgrimage. They go — already a "miracle" of endeavour. At Lourdes they breathe an atmosphere of intense exaltation. Hundreds are here like themselves with the same hope, the same faith.

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[64] Cf. *Popular Science Monthly*, Vol. 48, p. 237.

[65] The phrase is Imbert-Gourbeyre's in *La Stigmatisation, etc.*, Vol. II, p. 495.

It seems almost sacrilegious to turn a dispassionate and scientific gaze upon their exalted and pathetic emotions. But the interests of truth need not be regarded as conflicting with the interests of sympathy and of humanity. The patient is, let us conjecture, among the comparative few to experience healing. How has it happened? Who can as yet say? No one as yet knows what are the ultimate limits to the resources of life. Yet even so, this surely can be said, that the miraculous power of Our Lady has in no degree been vindicated by the cure. It is "faith" that has healed, not by any means necessarily the object towards which the "faith" has been directed.

If we remember the extraordinarily varied objects towards which the faith of the cured has been directed, no conclusion other than this is possible. Conjuration tablets as used by the ancient Babylonians,[66] phylacteries as worn by the Jews, the tombs of saints, relics real and fictitious of saints and martyrs,[67] holy wells, scapularies of the Virgin Mary, the propositions of Christian Science — these are a few of the objects of a faith which has cured. Now it is obvious that cures effected by faith in such diverse objects cannot be regarded as "evidential." One is driven by a historical investigation of "miracles of healing" in all ages and among all peoples to the conclusion that it is not so much the *quality* of the faith that matters as the *intensity* of the faith. In other words what matters is not the *object* of the faith, but the *faith in itself*. "Faith works," it has been said, "irrespectively of the grounds on which it rests." [68] A recollection of the innumerable false relics which have produced marvellous cures will fortify this contention. To quote the words of a sixteenth-century philosopher convicted of heresy by the Church — "The wicked and the philosophers know that if, in place of the bones of a Saint, we put those of any other skeleton, the sick will not less be restored to health provided they believe they are approaching veritable relics." [69]

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[66] See Article, "Healing by Conjuration in Ancient Babylon," *The Open Court*, February, 1909.

[67] On the whole question of Relics in the Church reference may be made to the Article "Relics" in the *Enc. Brit.*, 11th ed. by Prof. Albert Hauck, and to the sources there cited; also to Chapters 3 and 4 of *The Sacred Shrine* by Yrjö Hirn and to the sources cited by him; also to W. Moeller's *History of the Christian Church* (Eng. ed.), Vol. I (4th ed., 1912), pp. 505 ff.; Vol. II (2nd ed., 1910), pp. 214 ff. and pp. 331 ff.

[68] Cf. the Report, already referred to, of the Lambeth Conference, p. 10.

Modern instances in which theological or doctrinal considerations do not arise enforce this conclusion. A reliable writer tells us he knows a hospital in which a number of patients have been cured by tuning forks. It was suggested to the patients that these were powerful magnets, contact with which would remove pain and cure many forms of disease.[70] Another writer has told us of a case of paralysis cured by putting a thermometer in the mouth. This was done in the normal course of diagnosis by the doctors prior to their giving the patient some medicine. But on the patient, to the amazement of the doctors, asserting immediately that he felt better, they determined to persevere with this somewhat novel curative agent. With all solemnity the thermometer was placed under the patient's tongue every day for a fortnight, by which time he was completely cured.[71]

At the same time it must not be concluded that the *quality* of the faith in no case matters. It is obvious that to an educated person the tuning fork or the thermometer would be of no service in stimulating faith: nor to the *convinced* [72] Protestant would the shrines or relics of the saints avail anything in this direction. The nature of the object of faith must therefore be of such a character as the patient *can* believe in. If it were true that the quality of faith does not matter, one would be inclined to agree with the suggestion that there may be forms of faith almost worse than the disease.

In modern cases of cure along these lines where moral regeneration is necessary, the quality of the faith seems to be of essential importance. It has been maintained, and with considerable cogency, that the power of a blind or credulous faith is limited to the physiological region. "It cannot reconstruct character or summon anew into exercise ethical forces. A superstitious faith may, and does, work physiological blessing. Ethically and spiritually it can achieve only harm. The more deeply personality is involved in any given ailment, the more necessary is it that faith should have an object worthy of man's ethical dignity and one fitted to draw forth in reverence all his moral and spiritual energies. Such an object can be found alone in the supreme reality of the 'Father of Spirits.'"[73] The recent report already referred to says: "Where something more than physical healing is in view, the character and trustworthiness of the faith are of primary importance."[74]

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[69] Pierre Pomponace in *Annales Médico-Psychologiques*, 1860. (Cf. Saintyves, *Le Discernement du Miracle*, p. 221.) On false Relics see Saintyves, *Les Saints Successeurs des Dieux* (Paris, 1907), also *Les Reliques et les Images Légendaires* (Paris, 1912).

[70] *Religion and Medicine*, p. 57.

[71] *Life of Sir Humphry Davy*, by Dr. J. A. Paris (London, 1831), pp. 74-75.

[72] We say "convinced" here, because we know of Protestants who have joined the pilgrimages to Lourdes in the hope of alleviation of bodily infirmity.

Nor must it be concluded, because it is the "faith" that matters and not that to which the faith is frequently directed, that therefore the ultimate *religious significance* of faith healing is explained away. Agnostic medical writers may maintain that "the faith which cures is only suggestion."[75] But in calling it "suggestion," they have not said anything *ultimate* about it; they have achieved no real or final explanation of the cure. Whether we use the word "faith" or the word "suggestion" to account for such cures, *the fact* at any rate of the cures remains. For this reason doctors who do not accept the Roman Church view of the Lourdes healings often send their patients to the sacred grotto. Charcot himself sent patients to the healing shrine.[76] When a cure takes place such medical men are of course as far as ever from assenting to the orthodox Roman hypothesis to account for it. And, most will feel, justifiably. But let it also be clearly noted that this favourite word of agnostic medical authorities, namely, suggestion, affords likewise no finally-satisfying hypothesis of the cure. The cure is *mental*, they say; but what is *mental?* Away in the depths of our "sub-conscious" self, where the cure takes place — what happens? how does it happen? and what is the ultimate source of the "power" by which it happens? These surely are the questions: and our ignorance here [77] only serves to show that "suggestion" is after all only a word, and has nothing to say with regard to the *religious philosophy* of the matter, namely, that away in these depths are aspects of being and potency which we can only call divine.

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[73] *Religion and Medicine*, p. 294.

[74] *Ministry of Healing*, p. 10.

[75] *La Medicine de l'Esprit*, Dr. Maurice de Fleury (Eng. ed., *Medicine and the Mind*, cf. p. 48).

[76] See his article on "The Faith Cure" in *The New Review*, January, 1893.

To imagine that by saying a cure is effected by either suggestion or auto-suggestion we have reached an atheistic philosophy of the matter is only begotten of that fundamental confusion of thought which regards an explanation as to "mode" as equivalent to an explanation as to ultimate source. This is a confusion which is unfortunately very deep-seated, and continues with the unphilosophic in spite of the endeavours of most modern religious philosophy to remove it. We may revert to the case of Jeanne D'Arc by way of illustration. Agnostic writers counter the orthodox Roman claim that Jeanne's "voices" at Domremy were miraculous communications from St. Michael, with the contention that they were merely "the echo of a human voice or the promptings of her own heart." [78] But what, we are compelled to ask in reply, is meant by "the echo of a human voice," and by "the promptings of her own heart"? These "explanations" of her "voices" may be quite sound psychologically, but the psychologist must note that they do not involve any philosophy of the ultimate source of the experiences. To utilize modern psychological "explanations" to counter Roman claims of angelic interferences is one thing: it is quite another to utilize such in order to discredit a religious philosophy of life which maintains that in manifold "natural" ways God guides the affairs of men and nations.

As to the *mode* by which the faith works, that is a matter for medical and psychological experts. It leads us to the mysterious region of the relation of the mind to the body, of the whole personality to the animal organism. At this point, perhaps, it may be sufficient to say that the faith which seems to be necessary to these cures calls into activity certain subconscious powers of the personality which act beneficially upon the bodily centres essential for the cure. We are told, for example, that it is by the sympathetic nerve system that all the vital chemistries of the body are carried on, and that "faith stimulates and harmonises" the functional activities of this system.[79]

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[77] Cf. *The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 10–11, where it is said that the real nature of that in ourselves on which all healing depends *no scientific analysis can reveal.*

[78] Cf., for example, Anatole France, *Life of Joan*, already cited, Vol. I, p. 47.

Modern medical and psychological studies are throwing considerable light on this question. What is now commonly known as psycho-therapy is increasingly being recognized as a valid branch of therapeutics.[80] The cure of bodily ills through the mind is of course nothing new to medical science. It is, for example, a fact of common knowledge that the personality of the physician is a considerable factor in the cure of his patients. There are some doctors who by their strong, calm personality inspire faith in the patient. This confidence is frequently of greater curative value than all the medicines prescribed. And competent men will, frequently with a smile, acknowledge this. The "*vis medicatrix naturae*" will, in perhaps the majority of physical ills, accomplish the cure; the physician's task is very frequently to inspire that calm trust of mind and spirit which will enable Nature to do her healing work. The doctor who wrote on the wall of his hospital, "I dressed the wound and God healed it," was giving expression to what we regard as the final philosophy of the cure of human ills. So thought also the writer of the Book of Ecclesiasticus when he wrote: "From the most High cometh healing" (38 : 2).

That many diseases have a mental, moral, or spiritual root is one of the clear results of modern psychological investigations. Neurasthenia, hysteria, alcoholism, are diseases of the personality. Matthew Arnold in his day, speaking of "moral-therapeutics," said: "Medical science has never gauged, never perhaps enough set itself to gauge, the intimate connection between moral fault and disease. To what extent, or in how many cases, what is called *illness* is due to moral springs having been used amiss, whether by being overused, or by not being used sufficiently, we hardly at all know, and we too little enquire. Certainly it is due to this very much more than we commonly think, and the more it is due to this, the more do moral-therapeutics rise in possibility and importance."[81] The inquiries which Matthew Arnold desiderated fifty years ago have since then been, and are increasingly being, made. And they serve convincingly to show that mental or spiritual factors are very frequently the cause of physical ills.[82]

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[79] *Religion and Medicine*, p. 294.

[80] Cf., for example, *Treatment by Hypnotism and Suggestion or Psycho-Therapeutics*, C. Lloyd Tuckey.

There are different branches of modern psycho-therapeutics, different *methods* based on different psychological theories. Not all, for example, who practise such methods accept the psychological views of Freud or of Jung. It is highly necessary that those who discuss the "new psychology" should clearly distinguish between very dubious and unfortunate theories and a frequently quite soundly successful practise. The point that is of importance for us here, however, is not the theories and ideas used to express psychological views, but the *fact* that cures are effected by methods conveniently termed psycho-therapeutic. What is known as *psycho-analysis* is one such branch. Freud, in *Selected Papers on Hysteria and Other Psycho-Neuroses*, narrates cases of cure by such methods.[83] Many physical troubles are caused, to use the language of psycho-analysis, by "complexes" seated in the depths of the subconscious. The endeavour of the psycho-analyst is to probe into this subconscious region of the self, and to bring to light, to *lay bare* the hidden "complex" which so frequently causes the trouble. M. Charles Baudouin has given to us a very interesting illustration of the cure of a paralyzed arm by the sole method of psycho-analysis.[84] By such means incontrovertible cures of human ills are effected.

This also may be said of *auto-suggestion*. The name of M. Coué has been, through the publicity given to his works by the press of the world, familiar to all. By his methods it is sought to make the patient cure himself. There are psychical forces within the personality which can be summoned to the task of bodily cure. These subconscious powers can be reached through the imagination. The repetition of the famous "getting better" phrase is a method of suggesting improved health to the imagination. This impression sinks below the threshold of consciousness into the subconscious region. Here again, without subscribing to every psychological theory held by some to "explain" the method, and while there may be some doubt as to whether *organic* disease can be thus cured, at least it can hardly be controverted that many cures of functional troubles have been effected.[85]

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[81] *Literature and Dogma*, p. 143.

[82] For a history of "mental healing" during the past few centuries by a "spiritualist" see *Mesmerism and Christian Science*, Frank Podmore (1909).

[83] Cf., for example, Chaps. 2 and 3.

[84] See *Studies in Psycho-Analysis* (Eng. tr., 1922), pp. 257 ff.

More and more we are thus coming to see that in our human personality there is a mysterious realm which needs exploration. The last century, which revealed how wonderful is the world *without* us, has made way for a century one of whose great offices is, probably, to reveal how marvellous is the universe *within* us. Increasingly we are coming to see that the study of the human personality is only at the A. B. C. of its investigations. A large sphere of psychology is still a *terra incognita*. There are more things in this personality of ours than this world dreams of.

These facts suggest considerations of no little importance in their bearing on this question of "miracles." By the manifestation of potencies within the personality, undreamed of a generation ago, there is opened out to us a field which we believe will be very fruitful in results which will throw light on this difficult question. If the scientist is right, in accord with the conclusion reached in the last chapter, in maintaining the "explicability" of all events, here it may be suggested that this "explicability" in regard to some events that have been called miracles will be along the lines of the obscure potencies resident within the personality.

These discussions of works of healing have shown that there is a real unity between body and mind. This may be asserted without suggesting that a satisfactory account of the riddle of the relation between body and mind has yet been found. The state of the body is influenced by the mind, and vice versa. If the rationalistic philosophy which dismissed mind as a mere by-product of matter, an epiphenomenal spark shot-off by the wheels of the universe as it goes grinding on, is no longer a possible doctrine, so neither is that which conceives the mind as bearing a charmed life of its own. The body of man is more than the mere cage in which the mind or spirit is confined. Modern psychical studies reveal a mysterious unity between them. A multitude of facts of ordinary experience manifest their mutual relations. "*Mens sana in corpore sano*" is a most excellent maxim; and the "*Mens sana*" and the "*corpus sanum*" are mutually dependent. It is a familiar fact both that physical well-being promotes an optimistic outlook and that cheerfulness of disposition assists the healthy functioning of the body. Medical specialists assure us that nervous exhaustion and mental exhaustion frequently coincide, a fact of which everyone who has given attention to himself must be aware.[86]

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[85] M. Coué maintains: "It can be affirmed without hesitation that even organic disorders come within the influence of auto-suggestion . . . my affirmation is supported by many other eminent members of the fraternity in France and elsewhere who have found its truth demonstrated by actual facts" (see *My Method* (1923), pp. 37–38). Cf. also *Self-Mastery through Conscious Auto-Suggestion* (pp. 79–80), where it is stated that M. Coué "after innumerable experiments on thousands of cases . . . *shewed the action of the unconscious in organic cases*."

William James' revolutionary suggestion relating to the emotions pointed in a similar direction. He maintained that instead of the emotion causing the "expression" in physical reaction, the "expression" causes, or at least partly causes, the emotion. "Common-sense says, we lose our fortune, are sorry and weep; we meet a bear, are frightened and run; we are insulted by a rival, are angry and strike. . . . The more rational statement is that we feel sorry because we cry, angry because we strike, afraid because we tremble."[87] Without necessarily adopting this theory, we must recognize the service it rendered by showing that there was a closer mutual connection between body and mind than had been imagined. The "new psychology" emphasizes this close relationship. The facts to which we have referred in relation to subconsciousness, suggestion, auto-suggestion, psychoanalysis, hypnotism etc., all point in this direction. By suggestion the "subconscious mind" can be so influenced as to effect psychological changes. Authorities "prove beyond question that our subconscious mind acts through the instrumentality of our whole nervous system, both cerebro-spinal and sympathetic, and that through this complex mechanism it can effect important changes in our physical functions."[88] "There is no physiological function which is exempt from modification by hypnotic influence, if not complete control by it."[89] A recent book on *The Modern Treatment of Mental and Nervous Disorders* says: "The conviction that in the so-called nervous disorders the predominant part is played by mental causes has been steadily growing during the forty years which have elapsed since the work of Charcot, and has been greatly strengthened by the experience given to us by the War."[90]

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[86] Cf. Presidential address of Sir Chas. Sherrington at the B. A. (1922).

[87] *Principles of Psychology*, Vol. II, pp. 449–50.

This reference to the war calls to mind the important additions to the knowledge of these matters which, as a kind of compensatory by-product, its immense suffering brought with it. Special study and treatment of "shell-shock" cases along psychological lines resulted in many remarkable cures.[91] Cases of the recovery of sight, of hearing, of speech, have been narrated so frequently during these years that we cease to be surprised. A sudden shock effects what the unscientific mind would call a miracle. Modern medical science has been showing that sometimes even today the lame walk, the deaf hear, the dumb speak, the blind see. If it is true, as was said before the war, "that the time is coming when a knowledge of physiological psychology will be considered as necessary to the act of healing as a knowledge of anatomy," that time has been hastened by the remarkable cures achieved in these recent years.

No longer can these methods of cure be left to the irresponsible and the untrained. Such have been responsible for many of the disasters which have served to cast unnecessary aspersions on such methods. As Dr. Wm. McDougall has said: "It seems clear that the various systems of 'mind curing' in the hands of persons lacking all medical training, which are now so frequently the cause of distressing and needless disasters, owe their rapid spread to the fact that the medical profession has hitherto neglected to attach sufficient importance to the mental factor in the causation and cure of disease; and it seems clear, too, that a more general and more intelligent appreciation of the possibilities of hypnotic treatment would constitute the best means at the disposal of the profession for combatting this growing evil." [92]

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[88] *Religion and Medicine*, p. 40.

[89] *Ibid.*, p. 234. Quoted from Janet.

[90] By Dr. Bernard Hart, pp. 16–17 (1918).

[91] Cf. article in *Nature*, Feb. 13, 1919, on "War Neuroses and 'Miracle' Cures." Cf. also Chaps. 11–12 of C. Lloyd Tuckey, *op. cit.*

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We may now turn to a brief consideration of a closely allied subject — what is known popularly but misleadingly as "spiritualism." This is a subject which raises greater divergences of view than the studies to which we have already alluded, and this, without doubt, largely because of the "spirit" hypothesis set forth by many to account for the phenomena.

Here again the distinction must clearly be held in view between the *facts* and the *theory* or *theories* held to account for the facts. With regard to the investigation of the facts, science can surely no longer refuse such investigation on the ground of their seeming incompatibility with the hitherto ascertained laws of Nature. This *à priori* rejection of the facts was not so long ago the prevailing scientific attitude to the question. While in extenuation of this attitude of official science, the plea may be made that, with the multitude of new facts for investigation which the last century brought before the consideration of natural science, progress could only be made by Science confining herself to one aspect or conception of reality, it must at the same time be maintained that when this restriction of attention to certain facts involves the *à priori denial* of other facts, the truly scientific attitude has been transgressed. It is the same fundamentally unscientific attitude which rejected all so-called "miracle" facts on the ground of impossibility. The Society of Psychical Research, which was established in 1882 for the express purpose of the scientific observation and investigation of obscure psychical phenomena, had, in spite of the great names in science associated with it, to encounter an almost complete hostility on the part of the scientific world. Sir Wm. F. Barrett in 1904 expressed the object of the S. P. R. as "the accurate investigation of that wide range of obscure but wonderful powers included within the mysterious thing we call ourself." [93] But the facts which this

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[92] Article, "Hypnotism," by Wm. McDougall in *Enc. Brit.*, XIth ed.

[93] "Presidential Addresses S. P. R." (1882–1911), p. 183.

Society adduced for scientific formulation were often denied even before they were stated. "Our evidence is not confronted and refuted," said Sir Wm. Crookes in 1897, "it is shirked and evaded, as though there were some great *à priori* improbability which absolved the world of science from considering it."[94] Sir W. F. Barrett, in the address to which we have alluded, illustrated this prevalent *à priori* dogmatism from a conversation he had had with Professor von Helmholtz, with regard to what is now generally known as "telepathy." Helmholtz ended the conversation by saying, "I cannot believe it. Neither the testimony of all the Fellows of the Royal Society, nor even the evidence of my own senses, would lead me to believe in the transmission of thought from one person to another independently of the recognised channels of sensation. It is clearly impossible."[95] F. W. H. Myers felt it necessary in 1900 to plead with the scientific world that he and his friends were "not trying to pick holes in the order of Nature, but rather by the scrutiny of residual phenomena, to get nearer to the origin and operation of Nature's central mystery of Life"; and that "the only valid *à priori* presumption in the matter is the presumption that the Universe is infinite in an infinite number of ways."[96]

Tempora mutantur — and attitudes also. Yet it would be too optimistic a judgment to maintain that this attitude of wholesale scepticism towards mysterious psychical phenomena is a thing of the past. Only recently a modern writer has been discussing with scorn every form of what he calls "occultism," slumping together "medium trainers," "dealers in Memphis screens," "psycho-statists," "spirit photographers," *et hoc genus omne*, in the same category of spurious fictions with telepathy, psychotherapy, and every form or phase of mysticism and spiritualism.[97]

The root objection of many scientific men to the recognition of the facts adduced by the S. P. R. seems to be that these phenomena cannot be repeated at will. This is an attitude in some respects similar to that which at one time so frequently summarily rejected *all* fact-basis for the unusual events in the Gospels on the simple ground that they could not be made again to happen under conditions that would enable them to be scientifically observed and verified. Happily in regard to what have been called the "miracles" of the Gospels, that attitude is now so rare as to be almost non-existent. Under the guidance of the twin scientific impulses — (1) a more scientific critical study of the Gospel narratives and (2) a more scientific classification of the unusual — the *wholesale* rejection of the striking events of the Gospels is now almost a thing of the past. It is well always to remember that there may be quite soundly-historical events which have as their efficient causes factors which cannot be commandeered or reproduced at will. In regard to the facts adduced by psychical research one has to remember that it is of the very essence of such facts that they are not normal, in other words that they have psychical conditions not producible with the same ease as that wherewith the chemist produces his materials for experiment. Psychical conditions, by their very nature, are elusive. The facts which it is the province of the S. P. R. to investigate are in very many cases phenomena not of experiment but of observation. We do not deny the fact known as an eclipse of the sun because it does not happen just when we will. We observe the phenomenon carefully when it does happen, and then seek to explain it by "law." We do not refuse to believe in the wind, because we cannot make it blow whenever we desire to test its power against our anemometer. "The wind bloweth where it listeth" — but it blows nevertheless. We have to wait till it blows in our direction and then measure its power. Thereafter comes the difficult task of "explaining" the wind by "law."

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[94] "Presidential Addresses S. P. R." (1882–1911), p. 96.

[95] *Ibid.*, p. 180.

[96] *Ibid.*, p. 119.

[97] Ed. Clodd in *Hibbert Journal*, January, 1922.

It is very difficult therefore to believe that the following argument against the facts of "telepathy" can have been seriously adduced. "Why did not our Generals in the late War abolish as superfluous the so-called 'Intelligence Department' and tap-off by telepathic methods what plans were in the brains of the enemy's Generals." [98] This, had it been possible, no doubt would have been a considerable convenience for our Generals —

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[98] Article in *Hibbert Journal*, January, 1922, p. 254.

and also for the German Generals, who it may be presumed would have had similar powers. But in that case we should have to conceive of plans and counter-plans being evolved *ad aeternam* in the respective headquarters, with nothing accomplished. Such powers would, it is obvious, make war impossible; but, unfortunately for such a desirable consummation, "telepathy" involves no such claims. The very condition, which to our present knowledge seems most necessary for the transmission of thought from mind to mind, is that there should be some harmonious relation between two or more minds, a necessary condition which, it is presumed, not even the writer of the words quoted would maintain as existing between the two aforesaid warring general staffs.

In spite of these incredulities it may be safely asserted that what is called "telepathy" is now a "fact." Tennyson, in this as in other matters revealing scientific prescience, envisaged the possibility of telepathy in his question:

> "Star to star vibrates light, may soul to soul
> Strike thro' a finer element of her own?"

Sir Oliver Lodge, in his presidential address in 1907 before the S. P. R., confidently asserted: "Already the discovery of 'telepathy' constitutes the first-fruits of this Society's work." [99] Dr. Wm. McDougall has said that the evidence for telepathy "is of such a nature as to compel the assent of every competent person who studies it impartially." [100] Prof. C. Richet, in his latest book, affirms that telepathy "is one of the most incontestable facts of metapsychology." [101] Earl Balfour also, in his recent Gifford Lectures, speaks of telepathy as "experimentally established." [102]

At the same time, it must be remembered that the term "telepathy" testifies merely to the *fact* of communication between mind and mind by other than the recognized sensory channels: it does not afford any explanation as yet as to the *nature* of those facts.

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[99] *Presidential Addresses, etc.*, p. 173.
[100] *Body and Mind*, p. 349.
[101] *Thirty Years of Psychical Research*, p. 603.
[102] *Theism and Thought*, p. 252.

Let us consider, in order to illustrate this contention, an experience which is not uncommon. On approaching the turning of the road along which I am walking, the thought of a dear friend whom I have not seen for months comes suddenly into my mind. On turning the corner I see, to my great surprise, my friend in front of me. How is this thought of mine to be "explained"? The common answer, taking it for granted for the moment that the theory of coincidence does not suffice, is "telepathy." But how explain telepathy? Is my thought to be "explained" as transmitted from brain to brain by some physical medium? Or is this communication *sui generis*, and inexplicable along physiological lines? It is well that this present inexplicability should not be hidden behind such a term as telepathy. We are really in presence of a fact, if it be a fact, which is still a profound mystery. The very frequency with which such and similar facts occur is apt to hide this mysteriousness from us.

Similar statements have been made about other facts adduced by investigators in these obscure realms. Phenomena described by such terms as "levitations," "apports," or included under the general term "telekinesis," have been reported from various ages. In the lives of saints, levitations and similar phenomena have been often narrated.[103] The phenomena known as "table-turning" are familiar to all. Regarding these latter, it may be taken for granted that unconscious muscular effort is in *some* cases responsible for the movements of the table. Faraday's demonstration of this to a past generation did considerable public service in his day.[104] At the same time, the matter has not been settled by Faraday's experiments. There are authentic cases where unconscious muscular movement does *not* account for the phenomena. There are, as Henry Sidgwick said, "strongly attested cases in which tables are reported to have moved without contact."[105] Professor Richet, speaking of these table movements, has recently said: "It is a gross mistake to think that everything is explicable by unconscious muscular action."[106] And with this judgment few if any of those who are either familiar with the literature of the subject or have had personal experience themselves of the phenomena will have the hardihood to disagree.[107]

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[103] Cf. a series of articles on "Some Physical Phenomena of Mysticism" in *Month*, from May, 1919, onward. Cf. also cases cited by Richet and Andrew Lang in *Presidential Addresses of the S. P. R.*, pp. 222–23 and p. 319. Cf. also Chap. VI of *On the Threshold of the Unseen*, W. F. Barrett, 1917.

[104] See Faraday's Letter in the *Times*, June 30, 1853, also his fuller account of his experiments in the *Athenaeum* of July 2, 1853.

[105] *Presidential Addresses*, already cited, p. 15. Cf. also Chaps. 4 and 5 of *On the Threshold of the Unseen*, W. F. Barrett.

In regard to the interpretation to be placed on these and other kindred facts, it seems well at present to avoid a dogmatic attitude. The hypothesis of communication from discarnate human spirits is *one* hypothesis; and no one is justified, it seems to us, in ruling out such a hypothesis as *à priori* impossible. The rejection of this "spirit hypothesis," it is well to note, comes from strikingly opposed quarters. On the one hand the materialists obviously have no place for a hypothesis which acknowledges anything other than material agency. On the other hand the official attitude of the Roman Church seems to be that the facts of "spiritualism" are accounted for as the work of demoniacal agency.[108] The first deny the facts, and hence need not trouble themselves about hypotheses: the second acknowledge the facts, but would ward investigators off a scene of such dire peril for the faithful.

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[106] *Thirty Years of Psychical Research*, p. 402. In the same volume he classifies all the phenomena of psychical research or of "meta-psychics" under the three heads: 1. Cryptesthesia, 2. Telekinesis, and 3. Ectoplasm. The last two terms seem to be receiving general adoption. Instead of the first term (Cryptesthesia), Dr. Eugène Osty employs the term "Metagnomy." (See *La Connaissance supra-normale: Étude Expérimentale* (Paris, 1923). Eng. tr., *Supernormal Faculties in Man: An Experimental Study* (1923).)

[107] Phenomena classed as "Ecloplasmic" might also be referred to, though there is still some obscurity in regard thereto. Speaking of "Ectoplasm," Stanley De Brath has said recently: "It is a physical fact established by experiment just as certainly as the electron." (See *Psychic Science* for April, 1923, p. 46.) For an examination of the facts covered by the term "Ectoplasm," the reader may be referred to the following books: Richet, *op. cit.;* Schrenck-Notzing, *Phenomena of Materialization* (Eng. tr.), 1920, and the recently published study of Dr. Gustave Geley, *L'Ectoplasmie et la Clairvoyance* (Paris, 1924). At the close of a severely scientific study of the facts Geley says: "*La seule conclusion que je tirerai, pour le moment, de l'exposé aride des phénomènes, c'est la certitude de leur authenticité*" (p. 441).

[108] Cf., for example, the books of J. Godfrey Raupert, *Christ and the Powers of Darkness* (1914), *Spiritistic Phenomena and Their Interpretation*, *Modern Spiritism* (1909). The view seems to be that, in the phenomena where there seems to be a communication from a departed friend the demons have effected this with intent to deceive — in accord with the view of St. Thomas (*Summa* I, 89, 8) that "often demons simulate to be the souls of departed to confirm heathens who believe this in their error." Cf. also *Hypnotisme et le Spiritisme*, Dr. Joseph Lapponi (10th ed., Paris, 1921), where a medical critique of the facts closes with the acceptance of the view that they are essentially the same as those of magic and necromancy, and are only explicable by the intervention of preternatural agencies other than human.

At the same time, it has to be remembered, this "spirit hypothesis" is only *one* hypothesis. In the present state of our knowledge it is a difficult question as to whether we are shut-up to its acceptance. There is always the possibility that such phenomena may have as their cause the unexplored potencies resident within the personality — potencies which, while unexplored, are yet manifested to us in the study of the subconscious. The researches of the S. P. R., no less than those of modern psychotherapeutics, have revealed the extent of our present ignorance of ourselves. This *subliminal* (to use the happy word of F. W. H. Myers) region of our *ego* has been variously and suggestively described. It is, to one writer, the submerged portion of the iceberg.[109] To another our *ego* "*c'est la pointe d'émergence d'une pyramide qui se prolonge profondément dans la pénombre.*"[110] But, by whatever figure described, *it is there*, as a hundred facts of ordinary experience, as well as the unusual facts to which these psychological investigations lead us, abundantly manifest.

While, therefore, the "spirit hypothesis" to account for these phenomena must be regarded as a possible one, and while indeed some evidence seems to point emphatically in that direction,[111] in the present state of knowledge it is well to ask, Is this hypothesis a *necessary* one? Bearing in mind the confident affirmations that this question would elicit from so many, and some of them of considerable eminence in the world of thought, a negative answer seems at present the more truly scientific one. Professor Charles Richet said in 1905, in seeking to answer this question: "*jusqu'à présent cette nécessité ne me paraît pas évidente: car les limites de l'intelligence humaine, et des forces matérielles ou psychiques qu'elle dégage n'ont pas été tracées encore. Plus on approfondit la conscience, plus on y découvre des couches profondes, inconnues de nousmêmes; des consciences subliminales des person-*

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[109] Sir Oliver Lodge in *Presidential Addresses, S. P. R*, p. 147.

[110] M. Le Roy in *Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne*, December, 1906, Article, *Essai sur la Notion du Miracle*, p. 245.

[111] Cf., *e.g.*, *Some New Evidence for Human Survival*, C. Drayton Thomas (1922).

nalités secondes; se superposant, se succédant, tour à tour, et prenant les apparences de personnalités réelles, bien distinctes de notre moi."[112] The same great student of the subject maintained this attitude in his latest book. In *Thirty Years of Psychical Research*, after a very full account of the phenomena, his conclusion is, not the "spirit" one, but, as he expresses it, "that the human personality has both material and psychological powers that we do not know."[113] Yet, he adds, and perhaps significantly, "this hypothesis by no means satisfies me." Similarly, Schrenck-Notzing, in *Phenomena of Materialization*[114] takes the view that the "spiritistic" interpretation of the facts is not so far a necessary one.

In this obscure and highly debatable field suspense of judgment seems at present the course of true wisdom. Boirac has well expressed the present situation in regard thereto, "Will the *spiritistic interpretation* of phenomena so strange and hardly believable for all those who have not observed them directly, supplant finally the *cryptopsychic interpretation*, contrary to the opinion hitherto prevalent among the majority of scientists? This is a secret which the future alone will reveal."[115]

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[112] *Presidential Addresses, S. P. R.*, p. 220. [113] P. 596. [114] Eng. tr. (1920).

[115] *The Psychology of the Future*, Emile Boirac (Eng. tr. of *L'Avenir des Sciences Psychiques* (London, 1918), p. 287. See also the same author's *Psychic Science* (Eng. tr. of *La Psychologie Inconnue* (London, 1918). We confess ourselves as yet unable to arrive at any decision in the controversy between the two schools of psychical researchers — namely, those who maintain the "Spiritistic Hypothesis," and those who, like Richet, reject it. Some of Richet's utterances suggest the presence in his mind of materialistic presuppositions. He says, for example: "It is easy to admit cryptesthesia, even very far-reaching cryptesthesia: this faculty of mind is much simpler than survival, for survival implies a number of unlikely and unheard-of facts that clash with admitted physiological truths and are contrary to the logic that warns us that whatever has a beginning must have an end" (*op. cit.*, p. 212). Again, he says: "The doctrine of survival seems to me to involve so many impossibilities, while that of intensive cryptesthesia is (relatively) so easy to admit that I do not hesitate at all" (*loc. cit.*). These references to the 'Logic' of beginnings and endings and to the 'many impossibilities' are, we consider, distinctly unfortunate in a work of the scientific value of Richet's. A recent critic has maintained with a certain amount of cogency that Richet's 'impossibilities' reduce themselves to one — this, '*the impossibility that the human mind can exist without a material brain.*' (W. R. Bousfield, *Hibbert Journal*, April, 1924, Article, "Human Survival.") This critic regards Richet's refusal to accept the spiritistic hypothesis as accounted for by a "materialistic complex" deep-seated within him.

This chapter may be closed by emphasizing two main conclusions.

I. Such studies as these substantiate one of the contentions we set forth at the beginning of the chapter. They make possible and credible many events in history which have been regarded as "miracles" (whether rightly or wrongly so regarded is a matter which at present does not concern us: the mere fact of occurrence is what we are seeking to show). We have seen that the mind can produce effects even upon matter which would have been deemed impossible a generation ago. Thus some events denied as impossible by science, and regarded as "miracles" by the church, are seen to be both possible and explicable.

What is known as "stigmatization" comes under this category In the last chapter it was maintained that science now recognizes the possibility of such an event which formerly was brushed aside as impossible. It must here be stated that the explanation afforded by medical science of such a phenomenon is along the psychological lines to which we have been referring. While it is not necessary to give credence to all the cases of stigmatization recorded in history, it may confidently be maintained that there have been other authentic cases since that of St. Francis of Assisi, the first on record,[116] where extreme concentration on the sufferings of Christ on the cross resulted in the very "stigmata of the Lord Jesus" appearing on their bodies. "Parallel cases of

The attitude of much idealistic philosophy, it seems well to point out, is largely hostile to the series of ideas adumbrated by "spiritualism." This is understandable; at the same time it does not warrant the position frequently taken by such philosophers: viz., that the phenomena of "spiritualism" are not worthy of examination. The late Sir Henry Jones referred thus to the subject: "Perceptual knowledge of those who have passed away in death is not given to us, nor, I believe, is it capable of being acquired. My faith in Spiritualism, in all its forms, is too weak to permit me even to examine them. With your permission, I will fling Spiritualism, so far as these lectures are concerned, upon my rubbish heap" (*A Faith that Enquires*, p. 342). It seems well to point out that a weak faith in the "spiritistic" hypothesis, common to many beside idealistic philosophers, does not absolve us from examining the phenomena. The philosopher will *have* to pass judgment on these phenomena some day: and before he can do so this examination will be essential.

[116] Cf. *Life of St. Francis*, Paul Sabatier, who, on the strength of the evidence accepts the phenomena.

physical effects due to mental suggestion are well authenticated." [117]

An extra-ecclesiastical "miracle" may also be referred to by way of illustration. In the life of Apollonius of Tyana by Philostratus, there is recorded the following remarkable story. Apollonius is recorded to have witnessed in Ephesus the assassination of the Emperor Domitian, perpetrated by Stephanus in Rome. Philostratus gives a strikingly vivid account of the incident. Apollonius is lecturing in Ephesus at the time. Suddenly he stops short, and to the amazement of the audience cries out: "Smite the tyrant, smite him" — as Philostratus says, "Not like one who derives from some looking glass a faint image of the truth, but as one who sees things with his own eyes, and is taking part in a tragedy." [118] Cicero also recorded a story of a similar type in his *De Divinatione*.[119] Two Arcadians, intimate friends, who were travelling together, put up for a night in different houses at Megara. One of them was wakened up during the night by an apparition of his fellow traveller, who declared that he was being murdered by the innkeeper. A second vision announced where the body would be discovered. Both the facts announced were verified early the following morning. Such stories will not, in our view, be brushed aside as impossible, now that we have so many authentic records of the visions of the dying and similar telepathic phenomena. Immanuel Kant's account of the remarkable incident in the life of Swedenborg in connection with the Stockholm fire is familiar to most students of the subject. To his investigation in this matter Kant prefaced the statement, unnecessary to those acquainted with his mind: "I am not aware that anybody has ever perceived in me an inclination to the marvellous, or a weakness tending to credulity." [120]

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[117] Cf. *op. cit.*, by Imbert-Gourbeyre where 321 cases are cited. Cf. also article, "Stigmatization," in *Enc. Brit.* We have been informed by medical men of standing of cases of supposed advanced pregnancy to which they were summoned where the presence of all the physiological symptoms of that condition were *deceptive*. Cases of "growths" which seemed to necessitate the surgeon's knife, but which disappeared with the feared imminence of the operation, can also be substantiated.

[118] Tr. by F. C. Conybeare in the Loeb Classical Library, Vol. II, pp. 389–95.

[119] C. 27.

[120] Kant's letter on Swedenborg to Charlotte von Knobloch (a translation of this letter is found in Kant's *Dreams of a Spirit Seer, illustrated by Dreams of Meta-*

The *extent* to which this method explicative of "miracles" will avail is, however, the still unsettled question. Those who are over-sanguine of this method of approach must seek to abate their optimism with the chilling reminder that experience indicates there are limits to the marvellous works achievable in the mysterious region where mind meets body. It is neither possible nor necessary to state what these limits are, when frankly acknowledging the fact that they exist. The smiling yet terrible irony of an Anatole France is a salutary cold-douche to the overheated zeal both of those who hold that *all things* are "miraculously" possible, and of those who hold that all narrated "miracles" are explicable in the occult region where mind influences matter. Crutches only, he reminds us, are hung on the walls of the "miraculous" grottoes, never a wooden leg.[121] Likewise, among the many striking "miracles" related as having happened at Lourdes, not yet is there any report of a case of resurrection from death.[122]

Yet, even so, that a very considerable body of facts, regarded as impossible by science and as "miraculous" by the Church, is explicable along these lines, will hardly now be gainsaid. If it is true that things happen today the very possibility of which science at one time denied, must not science be prepared for a still further revision of her "impossibilities"? Do not these modern studies, revealing as they do depths of being and potency in the human personality, undreamed of even a generation ago, finally reveal the inacceptability of a scientific dogmatism that supports itself on what is, as Science herself must now recognize, a very inadequate knowledge of personality?

II. Further, must not the acceptance of these "modern miracles" affect in considerable measure our whole idea of miracles? It seems to us to be quite impossible to accept the old Paleyan *evidential theory* of miracles, if due weight is given to the ancient and modern instances to which we have referred. Now, in this

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physics, first published in 1766. Eng. tr., London, 1900) in *The Philosophy at Home Series*, pp. 155 ff.

[121] *Le Jardin d'Épicure*, chapter on "Miracle."

[122] Cf. the words of Mgr. Mignot, a Roman Catholic apologist for miracle: "*Il y a à Lourdes de nombreux et très réels miracles bien qu'il n'y ait pas eu encore de résurrection de mort*" (in *Revue du Clergé Français*, November 15, 1900, p. 575).

matter, we must as frankly apply these considerations to the Christian notion of miracles as we have sought to apply them to science. We may not, for example, utilize these facts and studies for the discomfiture of such scientific dogmatisms as "miracles are impossible," without equally candidly setting forth how they materially affect what we mean by miracles. We cannot have it both ways. If these psychical facts and studies have bearing on the matter at all, they not only show how things are possible that at one time were considered impossible, but also they must affect our conception of the "miracles" which the Church has always held to be possible. Intellectual honesty compels this *double* application.

A modern apologist who seems to accept still the *evidential* view of miracles, after referring to modern miracles, "such as are associated with Lourdes, Christian Science, Spiritualism, and with such a modern Christian prophet as Sadhu Sundar Singh" [123] says: "I imagine that if intelligent people in general come to believe such events really to occur, they will not be likely to disbelieve the miracles of the Gospel to have really occurred. . . . It seems to me quite likely that the next generation will find themselves in an intellectual world, the attitude of which towards miracles will be not unlike the attitude of the Roman Empire, but quite unlike the attitude of the educated world of the last generation; and by the attitude of the Roman Empire I mean a disposition to accept such occurrences, without generally attributing very much importance to them." [124] Bishop Gore here suggests as the result of the acceptance of these modern "miracles" two consummations: *first*, a mental disposition on the part of educated people to accept many of the "miracles" of the Gospels as historical; *second*, from his point of view seemingly an *undesirable* one, the attributing to these "miracles" a diminished significance. We take the phrase "without generally attributing very much importance to them," to indicate Bishop Gore's recognition of the fact that the acceptance of these modern miracles tends to evacuate "miracle" of its old evidential significance. We feel it necessary to stress the point that we must be equally candid in making what traditional apologetic conceives an undesirable application as we should in making what the same apologetic regards as a desirable one. We may not buttress up an argument for miracles with modern psychical facts and studies, without at the same time applying these same facts and studies to our view of miracles. We must set forth with precision that "miracles" are, if established by these studies, shown to be not contrary to Nature, and not impossible of descriptive or scientific explanation. The attitude, for example, which declares that "miracles" are not to be regarded as contrary to, or at variance with, the laws of Nature, and then brushes contemptuously aside any suggestion put forward to show how these "miracles" are in accord with laws which we are beginning to ascertain (cf. the endeavour being made to show how "miracles of healing" are "explicable" along psychological lines) is not one which intellectual integrity will permit us to countenance.

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[123] See *The Sadhu: A Study in Mysticism and Practical Religion,* by Streeter and Appasamy.

[124] Bishop Gore, *Belief in God,* pp. 250–51.

On the attitude of the apologist for the traditional concept of miracle who seeks to buttress up his argument by referring to modern "miracles" no more incisive criticism has been passed than that of Ménégoz: "*Il ne voit pas, le malheureux, que ce triomphe est sa défaite; que l'explication naturelle du fait en détruit le caractère miraculeux: que sa thèse coupe le nerf vital du miracle.*"[125]

It is our view that this latter application, while it will make un-acceptable the traditional, evidential, interventionistic supernaturalism, will not make un-acceptable a *true* supernaturalism. For it will lead us to look for the explanation of those "miracles" of Christ which may be held to have an historical basis, in the region of His unexampled and unexplored personality. We shall no longer maintain them as "inexplicable" events. We shall maintain them as, like all other events, subject to descriptive explanation, even though the day for such has not yet dawned and may indeed never to us dawn. We have seen that in our own personality there are forces, undreamed of in the past, which make many "impossibilities" possible. And when we come to the consideration of that personality which surpasses in goodness and truth and beauty every other personality, we shall be prepared to acknowledge that within Him there were potencies, in measure greater than ours, in so much as He is nearer to the heart of all reality and goodness than we are. Sir Oliver Lodge says in this regard: "The mental and physical are so interwoven, the possibilities of clairvoyance are so unexplored, that I do not feel constrained to abandon the traditional idea that the coming or the going of a great personality may be heralded and accompanied by strange occurrences in the region of physical force."[126] If such considerations as these Sir Oliver Lodge refers to are valid for our inquiry, may it not be said that they make less incredible of Him, Whose Name is above every other name, some of those "miraculous" expressions of His personality that have occasioned such difficulty in the past? But with these considerations we deal more fully later.

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[125] *La Notion biblique du Miracle* (Paris, 1894), p. 14.

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[126] *Man and the Universe* (cheap ed.), p. 168.

CHAPTER V

THE IDEA OF GOD AND THE MIRACULOUS
OR
THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION AND MIRACLE

We have been concerned up to this point with the bearings of science, considered under the convenient divisions of Historical Science, Natural Science, and Psychological Science, upon the question of miracle. It has been seen that the *raison d'être* of these studies is that all events are to be approached in the confident faith that they are scientifically explicable, that is, subject to orderly descriptive formulation. Such orderly formulation may not yet have been achieved; and indeed may never by finite minds be achieved. Delay, however, in achieving such a formulation to embrace all phenomena does not permit science to allow that there are events incapable by their very nature of being so embraced. It merely elicits the avowal that there are in this infinite universe aspects of reality which by their intricacy or by the poverty and inadequacy of both our sense perceptions and of our intellectual capacity baffle the keenest scientific scrutiny.

The central question now falls for consideration. What is the truth latent in the idea of miracle?

This leads at once to the whole question of a religious philosophy of life and the universe. It is obvious that an atheistic philosophy can find no truth whatever in the idea of the miraculous, and for the moment we leave such aside. It is obvious on the other hand that any metaphysic which recognizes God as the ground of reality must be tenacious of the truth for which the miraculous stands. This it must seek to do while at the same time being anxious to discard concepts of miracle which bring it into conflict with the assured conclusions of science.

Controversy arises whenever religious philosophy seeks to differentiate between what is true and what is false in the miraculous idea. Some regard the truth in miracle as one that necessarily conflicts with the aim and claim of science; in other words, that miracle stands for event incapable by its very nature of being subsumed under orderly descriptive formulation. This concept, if defended, inevitably issues in conflict with science, whose faith is that the universe is everywhere rational and whose persistent aim is to discover or set forth those formulations which express that rationality. Others regard the truth in miracle as essentially a truth of religion. Miracle to this concept is not the metaphysical *miraculum*, but the religious *σημεῖον*. Nor indeed is it the *σημεῖον* as objective event or fact; the miraculous is the term which expresses the experience we have of the activity of God in event.

Broadly speaking, it may be said that absolute miracle, the *miraculum*, is defended by religious philosophy of the Aristotelian type of thought; the religious concept of miracle is defended by religious philosophers of the Platonic order of thought. The first build up their religious metaphysic upon the reasonings of discursive thought; the second build up their religious metaphysic upon the intuitions of moral and spiritual experience. The first are concerned to establish a metaphysic for divinity in which a certain class of events termed "miracles" is "evidence" of God's direct, unmediated, intervening activity; and since, to this *Weltanschauung*, there *are* such events, they must *ex hypothesi* be observable or discernible. The second are concerned to establish a metaphysic in which God is the ground of all, and which therefore seeks to avoid the dualism of natural and supernatural events such as the first view necessitates. The first, maintaining that there is a class of phenomena which breaks the continuity of natural sequences, are compelled to make it their direct concern to discover the "gaps" in Nature and to find therein scope for the direct intervening activity of God. The second is inclined to regard this concern with "gaps" where God is found intervening as indicative of the lack of spiritual insight, believing, as Schleiermacher put it, that it betokens the poverty of their religious sense. The first defends the *miraculum* as a "proof" or "evidence" of its theistic conclusions. The second regards the only "evidence" of religion worthy of the name as the "contents" of religion apprehended in experience.

Here, however, in our judgment is a quite radical division. It is based, we fear, on differences of philosophic mentality which no argumentative reasonings will ever quite remove. To one the truth of a religious *Weltanschauung* is found in a series of logical proofs. These are rationally demonstrable and are substantiated by facts or events which are discernible — hence the defence of event called miracle, regarded as an evidence of the interposition of the First Cause among the secondary causes. To the other the truth is not something demonstrable but something "given" — hence the complete indifference to those so-called evidential events known as miracles. To one the truth of religion is a matter for demonstration; to the other religion when "known" in experience is its own "proof."

Thus the controversy on miracle between these two general types of Christian theology is really a much more ultimate controversy than *prima facie* it seems to be. It is really a controversy on Epistemology and Ontology. Radical differences here make it impossible for the severely traditionalist type of mind to understand that, say, represented by such religious seers as Schleiermacher, Martineau, and Sabatier — and, perhaps it should be added, vice versa. The first is concerned to defend absolute miracle; the second does not find this absolute miracle necessary to its theism. The first, to use the words of Mozley, maintains that there must be "visible suspensions of the order of nature" as "the guarantee and voucher" of a revelation [1] and as "proof, as distinguished from mere surmise, of a Divine design." [2] The second maintains, to use the words of Martineau, that "it is simply an indevoutness which imagines that only where miracle is can there be the real hand of God." [3] The first maintains that to give up absolute miracle is to give up the theist's God. The second rejects this contention, maintaining with Schleiermacher that "though absolute miracle is rejected, the religious interest in the miraculous is acknowledged and guarded." [4]

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[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 5.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 7.

[3] *Endeavours after the Christian Life* (6th ed., 1876), p. 352.

[4] *On Religion — Speeches, etc.* (Eng. tr.), p. 114.

Our own standpoint to these issues will emerge quite clearly as we proceed. We approach the problem by asking: What is the religious interest in the miraculous? What is the abiding truth for which it stands when religiously conceived?

The answer is that it stands for the belief in a God who reveals Himself in us and to us, a God who is immanent within us and transcendent over us. It stands for the denial that the universe of scientific phenomena is the ground of itself, maintaining that behind event there is thought and will and love, with which man in his religious experience may have direct knowledge.

The epistemological and ontological issue is at once laid bare by this claim to *immediate* knowledge of God. All mysticism makes this claim. All rationalism rejects it, or at least questions its validity. Hence the failure of a theology of mystic bent and a theology of severely rationalistic bent to come to any agreement on this question of the supernatural. The first, maintaining, to use the words of Inge, that "the communion of the soul with God is an absolutely certain fact of experience, which needs no philosophical argument and no historical proof,"[5] feels no "urge" to keep open "gaps" in Nature's processes wherein God may find scope for "proving" His Presence and activity. The very certainty of the knowledge of His Presence makes the mystic theologian repudiate with something of prophetic fervour the notion that God is only acting and revealing Himself in such events as science cannot bring within its orderly formulations. The second, on the other hand, maintaining, or fearing, that this "immediate" knowledge has no real validity and gives no certainty as to the reality of God, refuses to give up that notion of absolute miracle whereby, it has been held, that certainty may be demonstrably reached.

On the issue whether religious experience as such has any validity we must unhesitatingly take our stand by an affirmative answer. Religion is an autonomous form of experience and is to be confused neither with scientific experience on the one hand nor with the reasonings of philosophic thought on the other. If religion be not an experience *sui generis*, then, as far as we can see,

[5] *Speculum Animae,* p. 14.

there is no further need for perpetuating the term: Bacon's phrase "divine philosophy" is all that is necessary. All to whom, however, religious experience is a reality know that "religion" is not the "philosophy of religion." To *know* God is quite a different experience from believing in His existence. This latter belief may be created by the so-called "proofs" of His existence, but the former knowledge is never so created, though it may be so sustained. We are glad to quote the words of Professor Webb on this issue: "It is true to say that only in and through a religious experience have we any knowledge of God; what are called 'arguments for the existence of God' will never prove to those who lack such an experience the existence of God, but only at most the need of assuming, in order to account for our experiences other than religious, a designing Mind, or a necessary Being, or an Absolute Reality."[6]

From this main position, therefore, we seek to explicate, and defend, the religious concept of miracle.

Religious experience, if valid, has implicit within it the recognition of the *Immanence* of God, in the sense, that is, of his indwelling within the human personality. The immediacy of religious experience involves this at least. "Spirit to spirit Thou dost speak." "In Him we live and move and have our being." "Ye have not to raise hands toward Heaven," said Seneca, "God is nigh thee, He is with thee, He is within thee." "The Kingdom of God," said Jesus, "is within you." These classic utterances stand for the immanental relation of God to the human soul. Man has been made, as is said in Genesis, "in His image, after His likeness."

It is not possible to deny this religious concept of the immanence of God without at the same time denying the reality and validity of religious experience. All true religion has this truth latent within it. Even the "transcendentalism" of that ethical monotheism which is the highest fruit of the religious genius of Israel is consistent with the experience of Him Whom the psalmist can call "*My* God," "*My* Shepherd," "*My* Refuge"; of Him Who is the "dwelling-place" of all His people, from Whose immanent presence we cannot escape, whether we ascend up into heaven or make our bed in Sheol, or whether we take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea:

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[6] *God and Personality,* Vol. I, p. 151.

> "Not where the wheeling systems darken,
> And our benumbed conceiving soars!
> The drift of pinions, would we hearken,
> Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors."[7]

But religious experience, if valid, has also in its highest forms implicit within it the recognition of the *Transcendence* of God, in the sense that is, of His transcendence over the human spirit. Implicit within religious experience is the concept of one who is "higher than I." The notion of immanence by itself is not, we believe, adequate to the rich completeness of the experience for which religion stands. It is of course essential, for if the idea of transcendence were to stand alone, it would so separate God from the human consciousness as to make Him wholly unknowable; and a God thus merely transcendent would, as has been said, have "nothing to do with Religion."[8] Even so, transcendence is as involved in religious experience as is immanence. The late Baron von Hügel, himself so concerned to emphasize "the mystical element in religion," was tenacious to conserve the truth that transcendence is "given" in experience, and in that he revealed, we believe, the depth of his religious insight. He held that the study of the history of religion testified to the "intolerable insufficiency of all mere Immanence, the conviction that that very history testifies to the Immanence of the Transcendent."[9] What is true of the history of religion in general is true also of our individual religious history. There is in this latter history what the same writer would call "the sense of Givenness, Reality, Otherness, Super-humanness, as characterising the Ultimate Object and deepest Cause of religion."[10] The moral and religious experiences expressed by the term "conscience" implicate the notion of a transcendent *authoritative* voice. However the history or "evolution" of "conscience" is traced, the religious consciousness knows it, with Wordsworth, as

> "God's most intimate Presence in the Soul."

[7] Francis Thompson, *The Kingdom of God.*

[8] Professor Webb, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 150.

[9] *Essays and Addresses, etc.*, 1st series, p. 36.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

It is a "Presence within" — involving immanence: but it is the presence of one transcendent, who is the source of righteousness and who requires righteousness. Boutroux expressed the same truth when he declared that the religious consciousness "comprehends the idea of the sacred, of the obligatory, of something required by a Being who is greater than an individual, and on whom the latter depends."[11] Professor Webb, who while declaring that we must be careful not to accept a view of transcendence "which severs God altogether from the religious consciousness in and through which alone we know Him," yet goes on to stress what we have been maintaining — namely, that in religious experience the transcendence of God is "given." "Although Religion is never really an experience of God *merely* transcendent, there is always in the experience an element which we may describe as the consciousness of His transcendence and which at its fullest and highest becomes a consciousness of Divine Personality."[12]

The religious interest in the concept of the miraculous is that the term conserves the truth that God while immanent is yet transcendent. He is more than, or other than, an order of Nature. He is more than, or other than, ourselves. He not merely indicates His presence within us: He communicates His truth from above us. The awe and reverence which belong to the deepest type of religious experience implicate the idea expressed by the friends of Job in their question — Canst thou by searching find out God? And yet this transcendent God reveals Himself in us and to us. He is no abstraction of the understanding. He is the transcendent reality of personal religious experience.

Thus to the religious consciousness the kernel of truth in the idea of the miraculous is the idea of *Revelation*. In both terms there is innate the concept of the *activity* of God. A God who reveals is a God of purposive activity. It is for this reason that "miracle," to use Goethe's words, has always been "the dearest child of faith." Men looked for "miracles" because they were anxious to have a kind of scientific proof or verification of the truth "given" to them in their religious experience — namely, that there was a "Higher than I." These "proofs" or "evidences" we can, as we hope to show, no longer regard as valid. No longer are we at liberty to regard any event as a verification of the transcendent God of personal religious experience. Nevertheless the term "miraculous" stands as a memorial to man's experience of and belief in a God who is beyond us and reveals Himself to us. What religion, regarded in its deepest and truest sense as experience of God, is concerned with in this discussion, is not events known as "miracles," but with the idea latent in the term "miraculous." Religion will not be the loser if the term "miracle" be forgotten or discarded, provided the notion resident in the concept of the miraculous is preserved.

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[11] *Science and Religion, etc.*, p. 206.
[12] *God and Personality*, Vol. II, p. 87.

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The philosophic question, however, immediately emerges. If science has faith in the order of Nature, and if religion has faith in God, how are these respective "faiths" to be co-ordinated into a comprehensive *Weltanschauung?* This is the task which belongs to the study known as the philosophy of religion.

It should be hardly necessary to declare here, after the elucidation of the scientific attitude in Chapter III, that the scientist's endeavour to subsume all phenomena under "law" does not imply or involve the conclusion that there is no God. This mistaken conclusion, it is true, has seemed to the unphilosophic to be involved in the scientific effort to "explain" phenomena. Science, however, has for the most part now clearly seen that to seek to *describe* an order in Nature does not imply the denial of a ground of Nature. The scientific faculty and method, while true as far as they go, have their limitations. It is from this point of view that the familiar reply of Laplace to Napoleon is to be understood. When Laplace was questioned by the great Emperor as to how it was that in his monumental work, the *Mécanique Céleste,* no reference was made to God, he replied: "*Sire, je n'ai pas besoin de cette hypothèse.*" This answer will now be recognized as valid, from the *limited scientific point of view.* It does not signify a necessarily sceptical attitude to the religious interpretation of the universe. It means that science confines her attention to phenomena. Her rôle is, as has been maintained, descriptive and not interpretative. Modern science firmly maintains the same attitude as Laplace. A recent scientific Gifford Lecturer says: "The immediate operation of a Divine Adapter is an hypothesis of which, we say it with the utmost reverence, we cannot scientifically make any use." But the same writer goes on to say: "The idea of a Divine Designer is outside the scientific mode of formulation, to which it is an impiety not to be loyal, but it is not outside the right of interpretation which we claim as rational beings. It is a religious idea — this of the Divine Designer; the question is whether it is inconsistent with securely established scientific thinking. In our judgment it is not inconsistent."[13] Scientific formulations, therefore, while they do not contain any reference to the name of God, are not to be regarded because of this omission as implying His non-existence. Happily, this is coming to be understood both by science and by theology. The scientific "law of evolution," for example, is not now conceived as ruling out God, though many at one time thought it did so. What evolution has done is, as Martineau said a generation ago, to substitute "Development for the paroxysm of initiation. . . . 'Evolution,' whatever its extent, is not a Cause, or even a Force, but a *Method*, which might be the path, either of a voluntary cause, or of a blind force, and has nothing to say to the controversy between them."[14] Only on the mistaken view therefore of the exhaustiveness and finality of the truth of the scientific view of things is there any reason for concluding that science as such negates God.

The task of philosophy is to endeavour to unify the *raison d'être* of science and the truths of religion. This task is of the very highest importance. It is supremely important even to religious experience, which is, as we have maintained, quite other than it. For while religion is, as we believe, an experience *sui generis*, it is undeniable that our philosophic concepts either worthily or unworthily explicate that experience. If worthily, then religious experience itself becomes richer and deeper; if unworthily, then that experience may by inadequate presentation fail to hold its own in a world in which materialism of life and creed presses ever more heavily upon mankind.

[13] *Op. cit.*, pp. 470–71.

[14] *Study of Religion*, p. xiv.

It is for this reason that religion, while *sui generis*, yet does not find itself able to dispense with philosophic presentation. Religion is essentially a mode of experience, but in history it is always also a mode of thought. Religion never exists without a theology which seeks to explicate it. Religion and theology become, as history teaches us, almost inextricably interwoven. So much is this so that anyone who assails a theology is almost invariably regarded by the unanalytic as assailing the religion which it seeks to present in terms of thought. And while we do not believe that it is any artificial analysis which separates the two, yet it must be acknowledged that the experiential essence of religion inevitably gathers to itself intellectual forms. Religion cannot sit apart from all philosophic statement. For man is so made that he must try to think out the meaning of his experiences.

In view of these considerations it is now necessary to seek to maintain that the God who emerges as a postulate of religious experience is the God reached by the processes of discursive thought. The human mind craves *Unification.* If this unification is not regarded as an end to be sought after diligently, religion may degenerate into a vague and vapid mysticism, and theology into a bare and unsatisfying intellectualism. While, on the one hand, religion is not to be diluted into mere feeling without intellectual substance, so neither, on the other, must it be etherealized into metaphysical abstractions.

The problem of this unification has become exceedingly acute in this age through the vast researches of the scientific faculty of man. These have revolutionized the theologian's view as to the *mode* in which God works. When the idea of "evolution" was first seriously promulgated in the mid-nineteenth century, there was manifest in certain quarters, both theological and scientific, the endeavour to keep the two spheres of knowledge separate, so that theological modes of belief might be preserved inviolate from the investigations and conclusions of science. Sometimes it has been that "in entering his laboratory the scientist left his convictions at the door, though he might take them up again on leaving." Sometimes also the theologian's formulations were retained in severe disregard of assured scientific conclusions. These attitudes, however, were gradually seen to be impossible. From the first they were impossible to all who felt the "urge" of philosophic endeavour. And when science through Tyndall, by one of those lightning-like remarks which serve to reveal fundamental issues, declared that one of its earliest tasks was to wrest the entire domain of cosmological theory from theology, the magnitude of the issue presented to theology at once began to manifest itself. Thereafter the persistent quest has been for unification. "*L'esprit humain*," said Boutroux, "*ne peut plus se contenter de maintenir, côte à côte, la religion et la science comme deux faits bruts, sans s'inquiéter de l'accord ou du désaccord qui peut exister entre elles*."[15] This is the perennial task of philosophy, one of whose main objects, as Merz has well said, "has always been to effect a reconciliation between Science and religion, or, expressed in different words, to show the relations between definite and detailed knowledge on the one side and our beliefs and convictions on the other."[16]

Now, broadly speaking, there are four types of philosophic unification — the naturalistic or materialistic, the pantheistic, the deistic, and the theistic. Innumerable modes and modifications of such theories of course exist; but roughly it is true that any philosophy of the universe tends to one or other of these. Some consideration of these is, to our view, the best way of seeking to approach philosophically the question of the miraculous — to seek on the one hand to show in what sense it is philosophically necessary and defensible, and on the other in what sense it is not so.

Materialism. Regarding the first of these, it may be stated that the whole trend of modern thought is to reveal its insufficiency. Mechanical categories are being increasingly discredited as adequate interpretations of reality. Materialism, which in the nineteenth century was regarded by many Christian theologians, by, for example, the late Dr. A. B. Bruce, as the foe of a Christian philosophy of the universe then "in the ascendent,"[17] has in the last generation signally and rapidly declined. The presuppositions on which natural science rests have been subjected, as was seen in Chapter III, to a fundamental scrutiny,[18] and the assertion that matter and motion explain everything is found to be a veritable *petitio principii.* For what is "matter," and what is "motion"? It is only possible to arrive at a "materialistic" universe by first of all putting into "matter" and "motion" the theories which are supposed to be deduced from them.

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[15] *Science and Religion* (Eng. tr.), p. v, Preface.

[16] Merz, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 52.

[17] *Apologetics*, p. 91.

The theory may otherwise be labelled "Naturalism," but, so termed, it is, as we regard it, as inadequate as "materialism" to afford a satisfactory view of the universe. The term "materialism" directs the thought to the *substance* from which the universe, including life, thought, morals, spirit, is supposed to proceed. The term "naturalism" lays the stress on the *mode* by which, from the given substance, all proceeds. In a sense "naturalism" is a term less inadequate than "materialism." The word and what it stands for may even indeed be defended as a "reaction from the follies of supernaturalism." It may be held to imply "a negation not of the supernatural in general, but of a supernatural conceived as incoherent, arbitrary, and chaotic." [19] With such a protest it is impossible not to sympathize. Naturalism, however, as a philosophic theory, is fundamentally another way of saying the same thing as materialism. For the category through which is conceived the mode which governs the evolution of everything in the universe from the primordial substance is that of *mechanism.* In this theory, as one of its foremost exponents recognized, "matter and law have devoured spirit and spontaneity." [20] Freedom and purpose vanish from the universe. In this naturalistic world there is swallowed up everything that gives human life its significance and value. The great machine goes grinding on without either immanent or transcendent purpose to direct its course, and with no meaning that it is possible for man to discover. Laws, conceived as mechanical entities of fate, "operate" everywhere and always, inexorably, unalterably.

Such a view of the universe, if accepted, would render such terms as God and revelation merely an anachronistic heritage of discarded teleological philosophies. If there be no directing

[18] *E.g.*, by writers like Karl Pearson, James Ward, Boutroux, etc.

[19] Cf. *The Idea of God*, Pringle-Pattison, p. 89, where A. R. Wallace is quoted.

[20] Huxley in *Lay Sermons* (1874), p. 142.

mind in and behind things, it is no longer permissible to speak of revelation. If there is no God in and behind matter and motion, then indeed we must cease to speak of His *activity* in the universe, and must hasten to banish from the thought and language of mankind such ideas as those for which the terms "revelation" and "miraculous" stand.

From the overweening tyranny of such a mechanistic scheme of things deliverance is gained by looking within ourselves. Religious experience is in itself, as we regard it, adequate for the overthrow of such a mechanico-naturalistic philosophy of things. But even if that experience were not utilized to establish the inadequacy of this theory, metaphysical scrutiny itself sufficiently discredits it. Mind and spirit, as all idealistic philosophy has shown, are more ultimate than matter. The theory which denies *them* real existence is itself *their* creation. And probably no more fundamental criticism of materialism and kindred theories is to be found than this so obvious, and yet so frequently forgotten, truth. It is justifiable indeed to maintain that a materialistic philosophy is a contradiction in terms. Philosophy itself negates materialism. The mind which arrives at the philosophy is itself more than the "matter" which is supposed to be the conclusion of the mind's philosophizing. While it may be possible, as the late Professor James Ward acutely remarked, by setting out from mind to account for mechanism, it is impossible by setting out from mechanism to account for mind.[21] A thoroughgoing materialism is really an impossibility. With very considerable cogency it may be maintained, as it was by Flint a generation ago, that "the only kind of system of which history supplies no record is one which would answer truly to the name of Materialism."[22]

It is a familiar fact that the thought-tendency of our time has definitely set in a direction contrary to all such views. This is not a strictly philosophical treatise; it is not therefore necessary to attempt any kind of exposition of the metaphysical systems of contemporary philosophers. It is sufficient for our purpose to note a tendency which, in spite of radical metaphysical divergences, unites many modern philosophies. That tendency may be expressed negatively and positively. Negatively, it is in the direction of repudiating materialistic naturalism. Positively, it tends to the support of a spiritualistic view of the universe. William James' metaphysical pluralism acknowledges the validity of "religious experience," the "varieties" of which he dealt with so suggestively.[23] Bergson's epistemological irrationalism or anti-intellectualism is yet, as he himself regards it, consonant with the "clear idea of a free and creating God, producing matter and life at once, whose creative effort is continued, in a vital direction, by the evolution of species and the construction of human personalities." [24] The "activism" of Eucken is idealistic through and through; it speaks of *The Life of the Spirit*,[25] and postulates *The Truth of Religion*.[26] The definitely philosophical theism, the rise of which is one of the marked features of recent British thought, associated with such names as Ward, Rashdall,[27] Sorley,[28] Pringle-Pattison,[29] and Webb,[30] is of course radically opposed to materialistic naturalism. The first of these writers, as long ago as 1899, exposed it to one of the most drastic criticisms it has received in his *Naturalism and Agnosticism;* and later in 1911 he developed his constructive theistic system in his volume with the highly suggestive title, *The Realm of Ends*. The

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[21] *The Realm of Ends*, p. 18.

[22] *Anti-Theistic Theories*, p. 42.

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[23] Cf. *Varieties of Religious Experience.*

[24] See Letter of Bergson quoted by Le Roy: *A New Philosophy, Henri Bergson* (Eng. tr., 1913), p. 225. Into the question much debated a decade and more ago as to whether Bergson's *Creative Evolution* is compatible with Christian theism it is not possible here to enter. Many have regarded his philosophy as destructive of a belief in the personal God of theism. (Cf. *e.g.*, Corbière, "*Le Dieu de M. Bergson*," in *Revue de Théologie*, Montauban, Mars, 1910). We may, however, accept Bergson's view as quoted above that to himself it is not destructive of that belief. We are not, however, justified in arguing from this assertion of Bergson, that his philosophy is compatible with the traditional notion of miracle. We have to remember that he rejects the "radical finalism" of traditional apologetic just as vehemently as he rejects "radical mechanism." (See *Creative Evolution* (Eng. ed.), p. 41). The utmost we may claim from Bergson's philosophy is that it is consonant with the *religious* significance of the miraculous, a significance we seek to defend and retain.

[25] Eng. ed. of this work (1909).

[26] Eng. ed. of this work (1913).

[27] See his Essays in *Personal Idealism* (1902 ed. by Henry Sturt) and in *Contentio Veritatis*, 1907.

[28] See *Moral Values and the Idea of God* (1917).

[29] See *The Idea of God* (1917).

[30] See *God and Personality* (1918) and *Divine Personality and Human Life* (1920).

"mechanism" of Nature is teleological. Thus, Nature is being regarded, to use a figure quite commonly employed today, as a kind of texture of which indeed mechanism is the warp, but which is shot through everywhere by the spiritual woof.[31]

Science herself in her different branches no longer finds the language of mechanistic naturalism valid in any ultimate sense. The science of biology may be referred to in illustration of this contention. The position nowadays is very different from that which Flint noted as accounting for the resurgence of materialism in the nineteenth century. He held that that reappearance was due in large measure to the progress of biological science.[32] A few citations will reveal the change. A recent Gifford Lecturer set out to indicate in his lectures, "what contributions Biological Science has to offer to a general view of the world." [33] That contribution is, as he holds, to show that mechanical theories do not account for the acts of organisms. In the domain of the inorganic—"from solar system to snow crystal, from the hills and the sea to dust and dewdrops"—chemical and physical laws suffice for "explanation." But when we come to the realm of the organic—the "gamut of life from the microscopic Infusorian to the giant whale, from the hyssop on the wall to the cedar of Lebanon," the "abundance of life . . . revealed when the dredge comes up, or when the insects rise before us in a cloud as we walk through the grassland of a warm country"—these laws are inadequate. "Life" brings a new factor into the account, which confronts science with the incalculable. "Mechanical formulae do not begin to answer the distinctively biological questions."[34] Another modern biological writer maintains: "The phenomena of life are of such a nature that no physical or chemical explanation of them is remotely conceivable. The main outstanding fact is that the mechanistic account of the universe breaks down completely in connection with the phenomena of life." [35] The same writer has more recently said: "The science of Biology can only be based securely on the distinctive conception of life. Weighed in the balance of accurate quantitative investigation, the mechanistic theory of life has been found wanting."[36] Merz summed up the matter when he said: "It has been quite as impossible to banish the word 'Life' from the Biological vocabulary, as it has been to banish the word 'ought' from the ethical."[37]

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[31] Cf. Merz, *History of European Thought, etc.*, Vol. IV, p. 343.

[32] Cf. *Anti-Theistic Theories*, p. 105.

[33] Professor J. A. Thomson, *op. cit.*

[34] *Op. cit.*, p. 160.

[35] J. S. Haldane, *Mechanism, Life, and Personality*, p. 64.

The science of psychology also assists in the emancipation from a rigid mechanical view of reality. The realm of mind is as distinct an advance upon the realm of the organic as it itself is over the realm of the inorganic. If the concept of "life" is necessary for biology, so is that of "mind" or of "purpose" for psychology. A higher category even than that of the "living" is necessary here. The activity of a mind is something different from the activity of an amoeba. Just as for the latter a different kind of formulation is required from that which suffices for the potassium pill rushing about on the surface of the water,[38] so for the former a different kind of formulation is required from that which suffices for the growth of a cell. Thus, it may confidently be maintained that "the ever-renewed endeavour to extend the purely mechanical view is continually baulked by the phenomena of life and still more by those of consciousness."[39]

Now if mechanical views of reality do not answer the final questions, it is of the utmost importance to see that they do not continue to tyrannize over the human mind through the use of terms which have been so often interpreted in the light of such theories.

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[36] *Hibbert Journal*, April, 1923, p. 426.

[37] *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 377. The question at present debated among biologists whether the mechanistic hypothesis is to be accepted or no in biology can be left to them. Here I would point out that the term "mechanism" is itself ambiguous. It may be used *descriptively*, or it may be used *interpretatively*. As used in the former sense, mechanism in biology may be accepted without surrender of a teleological metaphysic. Mind and purpose are essential to an understanding of mechanism, whether in biology or in physics. In this whole connection, the profound, the far-reaching, words of Lotze in the *Introduction* of his *Microcosmus* may be quoted — "how absolutely universal is the extent and at the same time how completely subordinate the significance of the mission which mechanism has to fulfil in the structure of the world."

For a statement of the present position in biological theory see "Recent Developments in the Philosophy of Biology" (*Quarterly Review of Biology*, March, 1928), by J. Needham. See also, by the same author, "Mechanistic Biology and the Religious Consciousness," an Essay in *Science, Religion and Reality* (1925).

[38] Cf. *The System of Animate Nature*, pp. 180–81.

[39] *Religion and Science — a Philosophical Essay*, Merz, p. 97.

Mechanistic naturalism may be shown the door, but "steal in some other way." It may, if great care is not exercised, still dominate the household of thought under guises which deceive all but the elect. Here it is necessary to refer to the use of such terms as "natural law," "uniformity of nature," "causal connection" — terms which, unless subjected to critical scrutiny, may still exercise the dominion of mechanism over our view of the world.

The term "causal connection" may be so regarded as to carry with it implicitly a mechanistic view of things. When the "causal explanation" of an event is discovered, it is frequently concluded by the uncritical that some *ultimate* cause of the event has been reached. What really has been discovered is nothing more than a *sequence*. The "cause" is not some "power" inherent in that which is said to cause the effect. If "cause" be so regarded, then at once we are back in the realm of mechanistic naturalism, which regards matter and motion as having inherent in themselves all that have proceeded from them. Hume did a lasting service for philosophic thought when he showed that the concept of natural causation indicates the fact of *regular sequence* between phenomena, and does not mean that there is a force inherent in the "cause" which brings about the "effect." His acute analysis of the idea of causation in his celebrated essay on Necessary Connection is a landmark in the history of thought. He demolished the old, and indeed still popular, idea that there is a power or energy existing in one physical fact or series of facts which brings about another. Since Hume's day, the notion of "cause" has been subjected to yet keener scrutiny. The idea of mere sequence can hardly be held as satisfactory. Hume's view was referred to by Romanes as "the wholly vacuous or merely tautological theory of causation — viz., that of constancy of sequence within human observation."[40] Theistic thinkers such as Martineau and Romanes maintained that causality is more than bare sequence, and that our knowledge of it is "derived from our own activity when we ourselves are causes."[41] "We ourselves are the only cause of whose mode of action we have immediate knowledge, through inner intuition."[42] Such criticism of Hume, however, only the more certainly repudiates the notion of causation as a "force" inherent in matter — which notion it was his merit to have subjected to critical scrutiny. For the "force" is still not in the phenomenon sometimes called the "cause." It is a bare subjective necessity of thought demanded by man's own activity as a causal agent.

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[40] *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 127.

[41] Romanes, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

Closely akin to this term "causal connection" is that of "natural law." Here again, unless care is taken to scrutinize what precisely is involved by the phrase, mechanical views may be accepted unawares. For what is "law"? The term is ambiguous and therefore confusing. It is sometimes used to indicate an *enactment*, as for example when men speak of the laws of their country. A law in that case is a kind of command imposed upon man by the general consensus of civilized opinion, formulated into legal enactment. Now these laws man can break, if he will, and provided the guardians of the law permit. "Natural laws" are not laws in that sense; they are not enactments. Man cannot break them at his whim. If he tries to, they will break him. We may conquer Nature, but only by obeying her, as Bacon said. If, for example, I were foolish enough to say, I shall break the law of gravitation: and forthwith, to accomplish this violation, I jump off a high cliff, I shall not be alive to narrate how, instead of breaking the law of gravitation, it has broken me. If, on the other hand, I determine to utilize the law of gravitation by obeying her, I take a parachute before I jump, and so live to tell the tale. In passing, it may be here said, that the old notion of miracle as a "violation of natural law" arose partly from regarding natural law as a kind of enactment which someone is supposed to *violate*; for a *violation* postulates a violator. A clear understanding of what is meant by "natural law" would make it impossible for anyone so much as to use the phrase "violation of natural law."

Again, the term "law" is sometimes regarded as indicating some inherent necessity in the nature of things to be uniform or to act uniformly. For example, if it is said, speaking of Jesus, that "God's will was His law," what is indicated is that there was an inherent necessity of His being to do God's will; the words do not, or at least should not be allowed to, mean that God's will was imposed upon Him as a kind of command from without, to which He had perforce to give allegiance. (How far the "*non posse peccare*" idea of Christ's sinlessness was dictated by the *enactment* theory of law, it is interesting, and perhaps not unprofitable, to conjecture.) The word "law," then, thus applied to Christ means that it was the very nature of His being to do God's will. Now it is of the utmost importance to note that "scientific laws" are not laws in that sense. Those who so regard them are driven into the arms of the old mechanistic scheme of things; or, to use the figure previously employed, mechanism, having been shown the door, has been admitted under the cloak of "law." It was this mistaken view of law, as some inherent necessity residing in phenomena, which led science at one time to seek to impose upon thought a mechanical uniformity of Nature which robbed it of all purpose and of all will. One can employ the term "law" to indicate the inherent uniform necessity to be found in the actions of the perfectly good person. If he is by nature perfectly good, his actions can be predicted as being of necessity uniformly good actions. But one cannot refer the term "law" to Nature's sequences in that sense. The uniformity, if we may so speak, is not in them; it is in us. In other words, Science cannot speak to us of any "necessity" in her laws. It was this mistaken concept of natural law which inspired so much of the one-time "miracles are impossible" dogmatism. "Miracles" break, it was said, these laws of Nature; these laws of Nature are necessary uniformities inherent in the nature of things; therefore "miracles" could not have happened. In that attitude there was all that intellectual turbidity which has served to render the question of miracle so infinitely confusing ever since. The first mistake inherent in that attitude was that it adopted, or seemed to adopt, this metaphysically invalid concept of law, regarded as a necessary uniformity existing within phenomena. Science, as has been seen, has since repudiated this concept, at least as far as its own task and scope are concerned. The whole "descriptionist" school of science, as founded by Kirchhoff and Mach in Germany, and as heralded by Karl Pearson and Poynting and others in this country, has sought to purge its language of a metaphysical determinism or materialism such as was latent in the concept of "law," then regarded as valid. She has done this, it is well to note, not in the interests of any teleological metaphysic, but merely in the interests of clarity and of fidelity to her own scope and aim. The theistic philosopher is of course free to make what use he validly can of this scientific clarification of issues; though in the meantime he must not read into this "descriptionism" the admission by science of the legitimacy of his metaphysical structure.

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[42] Martineau, *Study of Religion*, Vol. I, p. 200 (see whole of Book II, Chapter 1, on "God as Cause").

Allied to that first mistake was the second — namely, the regarding of the concept of the miraculous as by its very nature antagonistic to law. For this second mistake the theologian must, in our view, be held chiefly responsible; for whenever he defended miracle it was in the sense of an event outside the range of scientific scrutiny and by its very nature incapable of subsumption under scientific law. These two errors went together. They involve attitudes neither of which is, we believe, any longer defensible. On the one hand, inductive science as such no longer seeks to defend the notion that her "laws" betoken *necessary* uniformity. She declares her task is merely that of *describing* and not that of *explaining*. She has to do with the *facts* as they happen, and not with the concept of cause in any ultimate sense. And while her observations lead to faith in an *order* which is traceable and describable by the human reason, she hastens to declare that the metaphysical implications of this *order* it is not her business to investigate. In a word, modern inductive Science quite universally recognizes that it is metaphysically dogmatic both for her to declare the *impossibility* of any event and for her to declare the impossibility of God acting in and through phenomena. On the other hand, philosophic theologians can no longer talk about "miracle" as event which is incapable of being subsumed under these descriptive generalizations of inductive science. If she does so, she is proving herself as metaphysically dogmatic as a *quondam* science. For how is she to know that *any* event is incapable of being subsumed under law? She must declare herself incompetent for such an affirmation, unless indeed she has the impossible hardihood to claim omniscience.

Thus, no longer is it justifiable to think or to talk of "law" as unalterable deterministic necessity inherent in phenomena. There is, therefore, no meaning in the phrase "violation of law." Any metaphysic, however, which is concerned to defend a teleological interpretation of the universe must beware of the intrusion of this metaphysically invalid concept of law which served the mistaken purposes both of a former dogmatic science and of a former dogmatic theology.

The *third* way in which the term "law" is employed is as meaning *formula*. This is its correct use in the term "natural law." Science herself, as has been shown, has come to regard her laws in this sense. They are merely "descriptive formulations." They do not impose uniformity upon sequences. They are merely generalizations based upon observed sequences; "convenient shorthand statements," as they have been called, "of the organised information that is at present at our disposal."[43] Or, as the late Professor Poynting said, they are "in all cases brief descriptions of observed similarities."[44]

Having sought to indicate the inadequacy of all merely mechanico-naturalistic views of the universe, and to show the bearing of the conclusions arrived at on the conception of miracle, it is now necessary to turn to other theories which in some form or other seek to be faithful to the spiritual purpose which religion discerns behind the universe. Only a universe which has its ground in God can have a place for any concept of the supernatural.

Pantheism. The doctrine known by the popular but ambiguous term Pantheism seems at first sight more adequate to the spiritual purpose discernible in the universe than that of mechanistic naturalism. But it is here to be seriously questioned whether this appearance of adequacy is not after all delusive.

It is well at the outset of any discussion of Pantheism to draw a distinction. The term may be applied to the goal reached *either* through the medium of religious experience *or* through the medium of the philosophic understanding. The first method of approach begets an instinctive sympathy with any term or system which insures to us the view of life "*sub specie aeternitatis*." All mysticism therefore has the tinge of Pantheism, or of what may be termed "the higher Pantheism." The second method of approach is in a quite different category. Here there results a Pantheism which is the issue of reason's endeavour in icy isolation from moral and religious considerations to embrace the universe in system. Such a Pantheism may be criticized by those to whom the Pantheism of mystic experience is not unwelcome. It is criticized by these not because of what it asserts but of what its assertion is held to deny. In other words it is repudiated not because it asserts immanence, but because it denies transcendence; not because it regards personality as a symbol inadequate in its ascription to God, but because it regards our personality as in reality non-existent: not because it finds God in all and through all, but because it fails to draw the rigid distinction which the moral consciousness demands between good and evil.

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[43] *The Recent Development of Physical Science*, W. C. D. Whetham, p. 37.

[44] See his Address to the Mathematical and Physical Section of the British Association at Dover in 1899. See also Mach on "The Economy of Science" in *The Science of Mechanics* (Eng. ed., 1919), Chicago, pp. 481 ff.

The scope of this work forbids a detailed examination of the system of Spinoza, with whose great name this general type of thought has, in the west, been usually associated. Some pertinent considerations, however, in regard thereto from the standpoint of this thesis must be set forth, and especially inasmuch as the refusal to defend the absolute *miraculum* may seem to some to lead direct to Pantheism.

In regard to Spinoza's system a very striking fact is the radical diversity of opinions held by those who have sought to interpret its religious significance. For over two centuries volumes dealing with his thought have poured from the press, and even after this lapse of time there is fundamental disagreement as to whether his system is compatible with the essential truths for which religion stands. A recent scholarly French interpreter of Spinoza, M. Gabriel Huan, cites two quite portentous lists of writers, one a list of those who affirm that Spinoza's God can be termed "personal," the other a list of those who deny such a thesis.[45] On the one hand, multitudes of these interpreters delight to use of him the famous epithet which Novalis first applied to him — "God intoxicated." He was to Renan "the seer of his age, the man who had the deepest and keenest perception of God." [46] On the other hand, he has just as frequently been termed "atheist" and that by no means only by theistic theologians who might be regarded as biased in the matter. A fairly recent American interpreter has declared that the right name for his system is "Atheistic Monism," and that "it represents a world-view which, in its essential features, is the very antithesis of that required by the religious consciousness." [47]

Now, in estimating the general bearing of Spinoza's system upon our subject it is supremely necessary to do two things. First, to ignore the term "pantheism" and to concentrate on the specific truths that Spinoza maintained. These indeed led to the ascription to him of the term "pantheist." It is, however, a term which may cloud the issue. By the very fact that "theism" is part of the term it might seem that the imperative assertion of the religious consciousness — "God is" — is retained and safeguarded. That, however, is the very question for investigation, and the scales must not be biased at the outset by the use of a descriptive phrase which almost necessarily does so. In the second place it is necessary in seeking to estimate the bearing of Spinoza's system upon our subject to concentrate on his system as expounded in the *Ethics*, and to leave on one side the *Tractatus* where he deals specially with "miracles." This is necessary in consequence of the confusions inherent in the term "miracle." For in the *Tractatus* Spinoza deals with miracles as events, and with the traditional anti-scientific concept of the miraculous. And while he has much to say on these points which is of abiding value, this work can be disregarded here where we are considering not miracle but the miraculous idea. The only question arising at this point is the following: Is the system of Spinoza compatible with the religious concept of the supernatural

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[45] *Le Dieu de Spinoza*, Gabriel Huan (Paris, 1914), pp. 220–21. The completest bibliography of works on Spinoza we have seen is found in this volume, pp. 305–36.

[46] *Studies in Religious History* (Eng. tr.), p. 463.

[47] *Spinoza and Religion*, Powell (Chicago, 1906), p. 339.

— that is, with the concept of a God who "acts" in His universe, who reveals Himself in the course of human life.

The whole question therefore is: What is Spinoza's idea of God? The essential answer to that question is set forth in the xiiith and xivth propositions in Part I of the *Ethics*, which may indeed be said to contain the essence of the whole doctrine. "Except God no substance can be granted or conceived" and, "whatever is, is in God and nothing can exist or be conceived without God." The *Deus* of Spinoza has but two attributes — thought and extension. Should anything further be said of this *Deus*, His Infinity is assailed.

Now what is here manifested is not, as we regard it, properly described as a "God intoxication," but rather an "intoxication with Infinity." And on two main grounds we regard the abstract unity here achieved as inadequate.

(1) It robs man of his highest attribute — personality. Self-consciousness is the highest category in the universe we know. The universe has through its countless ages evolved a self-conscious being. Is this self-consciousness but a transient accident in the self-manifestation of infinite thought? Rather is it not itself worthy of the epithet "infinite"? Are these self-conscious personalities of ours to disappear into the infinite abstraction where neither will they know anything of themselves, nor the infinite It know in any real sense anything of Itself? Nor can we regard this intoxication with infinite thought as a self-forgetful reverence begotten of religion. It is begotten, instead, such is our belief, of the icy abstractions of an intellect which in denying its own personal entity involves also the denial of the pantheistic conclusion it itself reaches. Pantheism may be regarded as a system as inherently irrational as materialism. Both systems end with the negation of the real value of the individual mind which has created *them*. And how it is possible to reach the abstract pantheistic goal from the concrete personal mind, it is very difficult to conceive.[48] Can there be thought

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[48] Since writing the above we have alighted upon the following words of Martineau, read many years ago, which may have sown the seed of our own thought: "You cannot even declare yourself a Pantheist without self-contradiction; for in so doing you reserve your own personality as a thinking and assertive power, that

without self-consciousness? To us the notion is as impossible as that there can be truth without mind. And should the Spinozist declare his willingness to accept the self-consciousness of God, how can *that* be granted while at the same time denying the real existence of our own personal self-consciousness, which alone indeed gives to us the very notion of self-consciousness? The tendency manifested in much philosophy which is tinged with Spinozistic views — namely, either to deny personal immortality or to regard it as a doctrine unworthy of the larger reverence for infinity — must not, we hold, be assented to by religious philosophy. All who are concerned to achieve a *Weltanschauung* in which personal values may have a home must agree with Lotze when he protested against the disposition which commonly governs the pantheistic imagination — "the suppression of all that is finite in favour of the Infinite, the inclination to regard all that is of value to the living soul as transitory, empty, and frail in comparison of the majesty of the One upon Whose formal properties of immensity, unity, eternity and inexhaustible fulness it concentrates all its reverence." [49]

With self-consciousness goes Freedom. The difficulties inherent in the endeavour to state in satisfactory terms the twin theistic doctrine of man's freedom and God's freedom are doubtless considerable. Even so, they are less serious to the religious consciousness than the difficulties involved in the denial of the first and the assertion of the second. The *evil* of men's deeds can then be no longer declared to be *theirs*, but only *His*. Their sense of *responsibility* likewise becomes but a delusive accident in the evolutionary scheme of things; it has no validity of the ultimately real. In the Spinozistic system the most invincible of human

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deals with all else as objective. Here it is that we touch the ultimate and irremovable ground of all certainty; whence alone we look forth and discover either the πᾶν or the θεός: and to negative this position on behalf of what it shows us would be like the fanaticism of a fire-worshipper who should put out his eyes to glorify the light" (*A Study of Religion*, Vol. II, p. 177). Cf. also the following of Martineau: "Here, therefore, at the boundary of the proper Ego, the absorbing claim of the supreme will asserts itself, and recognises a ground on which it does not mean to stop. Did it still press on and annex this field also, it would simply abolish the very base of its own recognisable existence, and, in making itself all in all, would vanish totally from view." *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 176.

[49] *Microcosmus* (Eng. tr.), Vol. II, p. 677.

beliefs — the belief of man in his own freedom — is turned, to use Fairbairn's words, "into the unveracity of a nature which could not choose but lie." [50]

(2) Our second main ground of refusal of the Spinozistic system is that it robs God, the creator and sustainer of all, of personality in any adequate sense. Here we come to the crux of the matter in its bearing upon the religious concept of the supernatural. Spinoza uses the term *Deus* probably as frequently as any other single term in the *Ethics*. But let not the use of a much hallowed term deceive us. Its content of meaning is not something eternally inherent in it. That content is given to it by him who uses it. Now Spinoza fills this content with two "attributes," called thought and extension. To say anything further of this *Deus* is to assail its infinity, which is *ex hypothesi* unassailable. It is, to our view, easy to understand a suspicion that arose in regard to the *Ethics* — of having been written originally without the word *God*, the terms " Nature " and " substance " doing all its work.

Can the religious consciousness be restricted to the use of the sacred term God, which involves nothing more than this? All the mystics of all the centuries will uncompromisingly repudiate the suggestion. The god of religious experience is certainly not here. The *amor intellectualis Dei* of the fifth part of the Ethics may be a home for those who "understand nothing but understanding"; but for that religious experience which claims to have direct apprehension of God and eternal values there is "no place for the sole of its foot." This *amor intellectualis Dei* — what indeed is it to Spinoza? It is, he says, "the very love of God with which God loves himself"; it is "part of the infinite love of God with which God loves himself." [51] "Hence it follows," he adds as a corollary, "that God, insofar as he loves himself, loves men, and consequently that the love of God for men and the mind's intellectual love towards God is one and the same thing." There can thus be no place in this love for any *reciprocation* that is worthy of the name. Love, we find, does not answer to love, but merely turns upon itself. Nor indeed does it

[50] *Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, pp. 179–80.

[51] Part V, prop. 36.

"turn" — that would be saying too much. It merely *is*. How far short does this conception of love come of the apostolic: "we love Him because He first loved us" (I John, 4 : 19). The Johannine is, we believe, a profounder concept than the Spinozist. In any case in Spinozism our *realization* of the love of God is delusive. We do not *realize* either His love, or indeed anything else. We are merely His *realizations*. Nor do we, in loving God, *apprehend* and find One who has reality apart from ourselves. We are condemned, if we may use the words of Professor Webb, "to the doom of Ixion, who found in his embrace not a goddess but a cloud." [52]

It is here at the concept of personality in God that we find it necessary finally to part company with Pantheistic conceptions. This is, as has been truly said, "the crucial point at which any theology which is concerned to ascribe personality to God must take leave of Spinoza." [53] A god who is less than personal cannot be, without unreality of concept, termed God at all. Kant himself may be quoted in support of this contention. In that famous section of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in which he subjects the so-called "Proofs" of the divine existence to the most rigorous scrutiny, he set forth in the following words what the concept of God should be held to involve: "We are wont to understand by the term *God* not merely an eternal nature, the operations of which are insensate and blind, but a Supreme Being who is the free and intelligent author of all things, and . . . it is this latter view alone that can be of interest to humanity." [54] Judged by this test Spinoza's *Deus* is not God. Spinoza has the word but has robbed it of that which alone gives it justification to endure in the language of men — self-conscious personality which freely acts and reveals. A teleological interpretation of the universe seems to have as little real place in this system as in mechanistic naturalism. "God," says Spinoza, "does not act from freedom of will." [55] In spite of his denial elsewhere, in a letter to Oldenburg, of the assertion that he takes from God all freedom and subjects him to Fate,[56] it is impossible to see in his scheme of things any room for the concept of real volitional activity on the part of God. The judgment of Leibniz is that of many who, while conscious of the sublimity of Spinoza, yet find his concept of God basally inadequate. "*Il paraît avoir enseigné expressément une nécessité aveugle, ayant refusé l'entendement et la volonté à l'auteur des choses . . . il ne reconnaît point de bonté en Dieu, à proprement parler, et il enseigne que toutes les choses existent par la nécessité de la nature divine, sans que Dieu fasse aucun choix.*" [57]

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[52] *God and Personality*, p. 132.

[53] Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

[54] *Critique of Pure Reason* (Meiklejohn's tr.), transcendental dialectic, Book II, Chap. 3, Sect. 7.

[55] Corollary I, prop. 32, Part I, *Ethics*.

Thus the Unity which in Spinozism is reached by the metaphysician has only been achieved by abstracting from reality the only unities we know, those of personal existences, our own and God's. The goal has been attained in the same way as so frequently peace among warring nations has been achieved — by the process of destroying personal entities and personal values. For the moral and religious consciousness there is ultimately, we believe, little essential difference between the pantheism which says "God is everything" and the atheism which says "God is nothing."

It should without doubt be emphasized that Spinozism has rendered at least one priceless service to theological speculation, namely, it has led, and still leads, to the repudiation of unworthy anthropomorphic views of the deity. This must be, and is, freely acknowledged by modern philosophico-religious apologetic.[58] It is a quite inestimable service which the genius of Spinoza has rendered to all succeeding ages, and one which those who cannot accept his whole system must *ex animo* acknowledge. Even so, however, the negation of will and freedom in God cannot be regarded as a justifiable protest against anthropomorphic views. The word *Person* as applied to God may indeed still carry in many minds connotations unworthy of application to the infinite spirit. But that fact does not absolve us from the necessity of applying to God the only symbol we have by which we may conserve the truth that His purpose and agency ever seek and strive for the redemption of humanity.

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[56] Cf. Letter 23 to Oldenburg, also Letter 49 to Orobio (at pp. 264 and 354 of Willis' *Life of Spinoza*).

[57] *Theodicée*, 173. *Œuvres de Liebniz* (ed., Paris, 1842, in 2 volumes), Vol. II, p. 177.

[58] Cf., *e.g.*, Eucken in *The Truth of Religion* (2nd Eng. ed., 1913), p. 219.

Nor is it necessary to assent to the view that this concept of personal will in God is incapable of philosophical defence by those who refuse to assail the validity of the scientific claim that the universe is everywhere rational. This crucial issue is considered more fully later when we come to examine the relations of theistic doctrine to the concept of the miraculous. In the meantime it is sufficient to state that exponents of philosophic theism have never acknowledged that the orderly sequence of things negates the concept of a God whose mind and will is the ground of that order. A recent interpreter of Spinoza has pointed out that in regard to the concept of God he maintained a new orientation as opposed to Cartesianism. In Spinoza, "Reason and Necessity," it is held, are the central ideas as against Descartes "Will and Freedom."[59] This indeed is true. We do not, however, see any adequate ground for declaring a necessary antagonism between the respective pairs of concepts. Must not all these four have a valid place in an adequate *Weltanschauung? Reason*, certainly, for the rationality of the universe must be acknowledged. But this need not involve the negation of *Will* — just as the lifting of a book by my hand must be rationally explicable and yet does not negate the *will in me* to lift it. *Necessity*, also, certainly of the logical order, for the pursuit of knowledge by science is not vain — as it would be if irrational capriciousness were believed in. But this, again, does not negate *Freedom* — just as the necessity a perfectly good man is under to do good deeds does not resolve him into an unmoral automaton.

To close this necessarily brief consideration of one of the supreme issues confronting modern philosophico-religious thought, the idea for which the terms "miraculous" and "revelation" stand can find no place in Spinozism. If it be said that in pantheism "*all* is revelation," this assertion can in substance hardly be regarded as other than the assertion "there is *no* revelation." Such a claim for pantheism is as delusive as the word itself. It creates for the moral and religious consciousness intolerable difficulties. Is God no more revealed in one person than in another person, in a Napoleonic "lust for power" than in a Christ-like "will to serve"? Are the recent earthquakes in Kansu Province, China, which we are told destroyed 100,000 lives,[60] and in Japan, which was even more calamitous in its results, manifestations of God in the same way or in the same degree as the beneficent activities of the Red Cross during the War?[61] Such views are immediately repudiated by those who do not divorce from reality the assertions of the moral and religious consciousness.

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[59] *Spinoza, Descartes, and Maimonides*, Leon Roth (Oxford, 1924). Cf. pp. 48 ff.

Deism. The theory known as deism, which like pantheism seems at first sight more adequate to the religious interpretation of the universe than materialistic naturalism, now demands some examination. An endeavour will be made to show that it is incapable of doing justice to the claims of religious experience. It leads, further, as we believe, to a concept of the supernatural which is incapable of satisfying the philosophic quest after unification.

At the outset it is necessary to seek to clarify the ambiguities resident in the term "deism." The term is used in two senses, and it is of the utmost importance in the interest of clear thinking to keep these two meanings of the term quite distinct. On the one hand, as used in British thought it refers to the general body of teaching of those much-maligned English theologians called the "Deists," who lived at the end of the seventeenth and in the first half of the eighteenth centuries. These differed widely in many important matters of belief, but were united in emphasizing the sufficiency of "natural religion" and rational theology, as opposed to the "supernatural religion" of orthodox belief and to the theology based thereon. It is to be regretted that the hostile judgment of nineteenth-century traditionalist apologetic upon the "Deists" has been for the most part uncritically accepted. They are much maligned because much misunderstood, and, we fear, seldom if ever read. To their lasting credit let it at least be said that they endeavoured in those early days after tentative statements of positions some of which are now securely established. They sought to rid Christian apologetic of that infallibility concept which has persisted until recent times. In large measure they instituted the historical approach to the scriptures. In regard to the specific question of Bible "miracles" it will be remembered that Toland in his "Tetradymus" set the example, subsequently followed by Reimarus and others in Germany, of interpreting the Old Testament "miracles" by the "naturalistic" method,[62] while Blount even suggested critical conclusions with regard to some of the "miracles" of the Gospels.[63] It was left to that strange figure, Woolston, to institute the great eighteenth-century controversy on miracles by the promulgation of views which led to his imprisonment.[64]

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[60] See *National Geagraphic Magazine*, May, 1922.

[61] It is interesting to note the inner coherence between this pantheistic view and the still popular notion which sees in every calamity a divine judgment.

In the second place, the term " deism " is used in a technical sense to indicate a certain metaphysical doctrine of the relation of God to the universe. It is in this sense that we now use the term, and in this sense alone that we criticize deism. The doctrine stands at the opposite pole from pantheism as a seemingly *religious* interpretation of the universe, and for that reason, though no longer a serious rival of theism, demands some consideration. Pantheism, indeed, may be regarded as an instinctive rebound of the spiritual sense of man from deism; and probably each is better understood when considered alongside the other.

Pantheism identifies God and the universe: it thus achieves a unity which whilst satisfying the philosophic quest, does so only at the expense of the imperative claims of the moral and religious consciousness. Deism, on the other hand, separated completely God from the universe: it thus resulted in a dualism which satisfies neither the quest of philosophy nor the experiences of religion. To this view God, having created the universe, leaves it to itself. Being endowed with "laws" which regulate its course in the best of all possible ways, it has no need of the immanental activity of Him who is its Author. He is its transcendent cause, but that is all. In no sense is He immanent within it. He is the "Architect of the Universe," but not its "Workman." As Martineau put it: "The legislating mind of the universe, and its executive media, are kept separate from each other; the one an imperative prefix, that 'spake and it was done,' the others, constant servitors, engaged with purely ministerial functions unconsciously performed." [65]

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[62] Published in 1720. In the first essay, "Hodegus," he sought to show that the pillar of cloud and fire that guided the Israelites was not miraculous.

[63] See his *Two First Books of Philostratus Concerning the Life of Apollonius Tyaneus*, pub. in 1680.

[64] It is not possible here to give an historical account of the Deistic movement. For a history of that movement in England in the eighteenth century see the *History of English Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century*, by A. W. Benn, Vol. I, Chap. III.

Without again entering upon a detailed examination of the deistic theory, one or two criticisms pertinent to our subject must be offered. In the first place, as already suggested, the rigid dualism it creates between God and the world cannot satisfy the mind of man. The supernatural and the natural are regarded as separate and distinct spheres. The supernatural is only to be found in the *beginning* of things, when the creative *fiat* was uttered which launched the whole machinery of created things in motion. The natural is *now* to be found everywhere within the confines of a finite universe. "Lo here is" — Nature, but never God. No "presence" is to be discerned in all and through all. No "still small voice" is to be heard in this natural universe. The revolving wheels of the ordered world are to be seen, the hum of the great machine to be heard — but that is all. Such uncompromising dualism leaves the mind no unifying clue to the mystery of things. Such a deism establishes, as Professor Sorley has recently said, "a very incomplete view of the unity of the universe"; it "fails to give adequate unity to our view of reality." [66]

Then further, this theory does despite to the facts of religious experience. Such a view of God and the world could be felt adequate only in an age such as the eighteenth century when the religious sense had lost vitality and warmth. No one who knows God in personal experience can be satisfied with a theory which confines Him to the heavens. No one whose religious sense perceives His revealing activity here and now can tolerate a doctrine which restricts His action to a beginning when He called the universe out of the void. Thoroughgoing deism and religion, viewed in its deepest sense as personal experience of God, are incompatible terms. It has with justice been called "that thin substitute for faith which philosophical rationalists were wont to offer." [67] Its prevalence in the eighteenth century has been thus characterized, and, as we believe, not unfairly: "Mechanical science, having recently brought the heavens under its domain, tried its hand at everything, and tyrannised over the conceptions of men, and shaped their whole program of the universe; while the religious life sunk in languor and talking prose had no enthusiam to be hurt and brought to tears by so undivine a world." [68] Such a creed vanishes like the mists before the rising sun when the reviving and revealing spirit of God is poured upon the hearts of men. The religious revival of the eighteenth century may be regarded as revealing its hollowness and insufficiency.

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[65] *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 144.

[66] *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, pp. 460–61.

Now this wholly transcendent supernaturalism of deism, while at first sight seemingly consonant with the notion for which the miraculous stands, is seen upon examination either (1) to rule it out altogether, or (2) to make room for it only in the inacceptable sense of interference with, or abrogation of, natural law. These two positions may be considered separately.

1. Thoroughgoing deism rules out the miraculous concept altogether. For that theory requires God only at the beginning of things. He is held to have imposed upon Nature certain entities called fixed laws which were regarded as sufficient by themselves to govern the universe. A concept therefore which maintains that God is *active* within His universe is *ex hypothesi* ruled out. Deism can only speak of revelation in the sense of a mechanical unfolding of that which from the beginning has been latent within the universe.

Between such a theory and the mechanism of naturalism the distinction is so slight that it is hardly discernible. A God who has deputed "laws" to do His work for Him does not greatly matter. He certainly "will hardly be missed." The cosmic watch having been perfectly made requires no "interference," not even on the part of its maker to wind it up from time to time.

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[67] Boutroux, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

[68] Martineau, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 145.

The wheels of the universe revolve and its Creator is not even necessary to keep them in motion. Deism thus involves a return to the realm of mechanistic theories. There is no place for the concept of a revealing God in such a universe. Excessive transcendence just as much as excessive immanence renders that idea impossible.[69]

Against such a system the religious consciousness in every age will utter its emphatic protest. In Pascal's outspoken protest we find just what we should have been led to expect from so religious a mind. "I cannot pardon Descartes. He would have been well pleased to have made no reference to the Deity in his whole system of philosophy; he therefore introduces him just to set the universe in motion by the touch of a finger, and after that has nothing more for a God to do." [70] The widespread repudiation in these days of the deistic concept is in large measure caused by the uprising of a spiritual interpretation of the universe which demands recognition for the experiences covered by the term "religion." It may safely be predicted that whenever religion is given its due place in a world-interpretation, rigid deism will be repudiated. We might, indeed, in strict rigour, as Kant remarked, "deny to the *Deist* any belief in God at all, and regard him merely as a maintainer of the existence of a primal being or thing — the supreme cause of all other things." [71]

2. A modified deism makes room for the idea of miracle, but in the old sense that is, to our view, no longer acceptable. God, being viewed as entirely apart and distinct from the world, can only act within it by interference. He can only specifically reveal His purposes of love for men by abrogating or suspending or violating the "laws" which He Himself is held to have given to Nature at the beginning, and which themselves are conceived as completely sufficient for its maintenance.

There is undeniably much latent deism in past miracle apologetic of orthodox theistic belief. The notion of arbitrary will interfering with or intruding within the "laws" of the universe, these "laws" being conceived as mechanically operating entities distinct from that will, is, to our view, a deistic heritage which demands repudiation. Difficult problems for thought doubtless emerge here. At the same time the repudiation, such at least is our judgment, requires to be made. In the end theistic belief will not be the poorer but the richer. Instead of regarding the universe as owing its existence to arbitrary will, we shall regard its "creation" as necessarily involved in the very Nature of God. Instead of believing that there are "proofs" of His "interference" whenever no scientific explanation of any phenomenon can be found, the moral and spiritual sense will find His manifestation in all experiences where it itself with inner certainty can say, "Lo, God is here."

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[69] Of Locke and other deists it has been said that "no action . . . was attributed to the First Cause which could contradict the mechanical laws proclaimed by Science. Deistic rationalism rejected miracle and special Providence." Boutroux, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

[70] *Pensées.*

[71] *Critique of Pure Reason*, transcendental dialectic, Book II, Chapter 3, Sect. 7.

Thus, all modifications of deism based on the notion of interference are here regarded as inacceptable as the thoroughgoing type. They seek, it is true, to give place to the ideas of the supernatural and of revelation which are so essential to religion, but only do so by a combination of views which cannot long, as we believe, abide in company. The idea of divine aloofness from the world, which is that of thoroughgoing deism, and the idea of divine interference within the world, which is that of a modified deism, cannot long remain in amity together. They may be likened to the lion and the lamb which lie down together: in the end the one, we fear, by its very nature, swallows the other. If aloofness be regarded as the lion, then interference is swallowed up, and thoroughgoing deism remains. We are left with a God-forsaken, self-sufficient universe, God being somewhere in the background where His presence matters not at all. If interference be regarded as the lion then aloofness is swallowed up, and a doctrine remains of which it may be said that it has the outward aspect of theism, but its inward sustenance is deism. The basal concept in the theory is that of a God who has nothing *directly* to do with the order of the universe, the semblance of theism being gained by adopting the concept of occasional "interferences." Deism has sought to escape the reproach that its God is one who can never be missed by declaring that from time to time He comes back to His self-operating universe and performs a "miracle." Such a God is not, however, the *living*, perpetually operating God of theism. Rather He is the God of the prophet's mockery — a God who ofttimes sleeps and only wakes to activity at occasional intervals.

Theism. The theory known as theism endeavours to maintain both the immanence and the transcendence of God. It thus seeks to combine the half-truth which pantheism declares with the half-truth which deism proclaims. As against pantheism, it maintains that God is a personal spirit transcending the universe. While within the world He is not *exhausted* by it. Nature, while His dwelling place, is not Himself. He is active within Nature and not coincident with Nature. Impersonal necessity is not the category before which all else must bow; the guiding and controlling energy of personal love is the final clue to the mystery of things. Divine purpose and revelation are in all and through all and above all. As against deism, theism maintains that He is ever active within the universe. "My Father worketh hitherto," was our Lord's way of expressing the truth. While transcending the world, He is not aloof from it. While the ground of its being, He is no external artificer. Nature is no self-sufficient mechanism. It depends upon, and indeed is, the expression of the activity of His indwelling presence. Mechanistic conceptions are inadequate for its understanding. The most vital distinction, to our view, between a theistic universe and the universe of either pantheism or deism is that it asserts unflinchingly the primacy of our ethical concepts in our interpretation of the idea of God. Neither an impersonal immanence nor an external transcendence can satisfy: but only a transcendent immanence construed through the ethical understanding.[72]

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[72] Cf. the words of Sorley, *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, p. 466. "The Theistic universe is fundamentally ethical. The central point in our idea of God is not the Pantheistic conception of a substance of infinite attributes or an Absolute free from all determinations; nor is it the deistic conception of an external Creator or First Cause. Neither 'Own Cause' nor 'First Cause' will be our conception but — if we must speak of cause at all — then it will be Final Cause. And Final Cause must mean the purpose of realising goodness."

It is here impossible to enter upon a discussion of all the considerations which lead to the acceptance of theism as the most adequate view of the universe. Into the so-called proofs it is not necessary to enter, except perhaps to say that the term "proofs" is not acceptable. "Theistic faith," as Campbell Frazer emphasized a generation ago, "as the condition of all proof is itself incapable of scientific proof"[73] The standpoint here adopted is that the hypothesis of Christian theism gives the most adequate explanation of the facts of the universe and of human life. It affords us, if we may revert to a previous figure, our final illuminant. It is by virtue of its light that we thread our way through the mysteries of life and reach "Home" at last.

It would be idle to deny that there are difficulties for thought in a theistic philosophy. In *any* "view of God and the world" there are difficulties. But it is necessary to ask, In which theory are there found the fewest difficulties? In what view of things is there most adequate place given to the facts of man's deepest and truest life? To such questions the answer, at least for ourselves, is: A Christian theism which seeks to comprehend in its view both the immanence and the transcendence of God. To achieve this combination, it will be acknowledged, is no light task for the theistic philosopher. One of the chief problems, indeed, for theistic thought in this generation is without doubt to achieve a coherent philosophy reconciling the immanence with the transcendence of God. To steer safely between the Scylla of deism and the Charybdis of pantheism is a task which few find capable of accomplishment. Different temperaments will probably continue to disagree as to which is the more perilous side of the strait, and be inclined, therefore, to keep so far away from that side as to bring disaster from the other. The central difficulty in achieving a coherent philosophy of the supernatural is found here. The so-called anti-miraculous trend of much modern theology is without question determined by the stress laid on immanence. Pope Pius X was undoubtedly right when he declared in the famous encyclical "Pascendi" that this was the central idea in the modernism of

[73] *Philosophy of Theism*, Vol. II, p. 37.

the Roman Catholic Church which he so uncompromisingly condemned. But those who so condemn the modern emphasis seem to have forgotten that it is the expression of the utter inacceptability of an over-stressed transcendence, and of that concept of miracle accompanying it. The modern mind, if we may be allowed to interpret that mind to itself, rebels against a method which began with an anti-natural and arbitrary concept of the miraculous, and which then made that concept central to its theism, instead of beginning with the ethical concepts of theism and then arguing therefrom to its view of the supernatural.

Our present mode of approach is, as we understand it, to reverse this order of nineteenth-century traditionalist apologetic for miracle. That apologetic began with certain events which it called "miracles." These it accepted as for the most part historical — this acceptance being in large measure determined by the infallibility concept of Bible and tradition. Then came the astonishing *volte face*. Events which had been accepted as historical, because to Protestantism they were found in the Bible and because to Catholicism they were found in Bible and Church, were used to construe, and rigidly determine, the doctrine of theism. A strange and confusing interplay of arguments then became the stock-in-trade of much theistic statement, — theism being now held to be evidenced by these "miracles," and now held to be a proof of the possibility of these "miracles." Locke, Butler, Paley, Trench, and Mozley, down to some modern apologists, have held that "miracles" prove the intervention of God, or in other words were theistically, or theologically, significant, or to use the customary word, that they were *evidential*. When this assertion was interrogated or challenged by those who were not able to accept its method of reasoning, when for example it was asked what kind of a God do these "miracles" prove, the reply usually given involved a quite different field of inquiry — as when for example it was said that to doubt "miracle" is to assail the primary assertion of theism. This reply when scrutinized turns out to be that the omnipotence of God makes all things "possible."

Our method of approach, on the other hand, is to begin from a position which is being generally regarded as unassailable, namely, that no alleged events called miracles can be regarded as *evidential*. This is the position we note of Dr. Tennant, who, in his treatise on the subject, is yet anxious to conserve the possibility of absolute miracle for theism. He has declared that it is impossible to speak of any event as *miraculum* — that is, as absolute or objective miracle.[74] The implications of these contentions we shall discuss in a subsequent appendix with a view to a completer clarification of the issue. In the meantime they may be taken as supporting the conclusion to which we have already been led, that no event as such can be regarded as *evidential*. This conclusion is obvious to all who have considered the limitations of human knowledge. It is impossible without omniscience to pronounce any marvellous event to be a "miracle" in the absolute or traditionalist meaning of that term, in the sense, that is, of being incapable of subsumption under natural law.

It cannot of course be overlooked that this position is a distinct departure from traditionalist apologetic. It would doubtless have been regarded as a surrender of the main issue by all those nineteenth-century apologists who, led by Mozley, maintained that "it is the very nature of a miracle to give proof of a Divine design." [75]

The truth of this position, however, being generally acknowledged, there is no other course open, as we hold, but to begin with our theism and to ask what concept of the miraculous is consonant therewith. But that method of approach merely drives us further back to determine exactly what we mean by theism. And since, as we hold, and as is universally recognized, both immanence and transcendence are necessary ideas to theism, it is essential to set forth as clearly as may be what these two concepts involve.

Immanence and transcendence. The best way to achieve a coherent and constructive view of transcendence and immanence is to ask: What meaning can be given and what meaning cannot be given to each of these terms? For it has to be remembered that these words only figuratively and therefore imperfectly express what it is desired to maintain. They are only *words*, and must not be superficially employed, as they frequently have been, to settle arbitrarily the discussion. Their content of meaning is not inherent in them; it is given to them by those experiences, and by that reasoning thereupon, which have brought *them* into being. This may be realized by noting that each term, superficially regarded, carries with it a *spatial* notion. That which is transcendent is that which is *above;* that which is immanent is that which is *within*. In each case the idea of a spatial relationship is suggested by the term. Now it is important to note that these spatial ideas are only figurative. It is hardly possible to avoid thinking in terms of space, and certainly it is not possible to avoid words which suggest it. But for spirit space has no meaning. The personal spirit whom we call God must not be regarded therefore as transcending the universe in a spatial sense, as external to or outside the universe. Nor, likewise, must God be conceived as immanent within the universe in the sense that He coincides spatially with the universe. Such false and impossible ideas may, however, to the unreflecting seem to be involved in the terms "transcendence" and "immanence."

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[74] *Miracle and Its Philosophical Presuppositions*, p. 53.

[75] Mozley, *On Miracles* (3rd ed., 1872), p. 7.

It is not therefore adequate to approach the investigation of these words etymologically, for etymology is the father of abundant metaphysical confusions. It is necessary to ask, What truths are these terms meant to conserve?

As regards transcendence, it may be said that what has to be conserved by the use of the term is the freedom of God, or, to put it otherwise, the personality of God. Any view which regards God as bound to a fixed scheme of things conceived as *external to Himself* must be rejected at once. For such a view results either in a "finite God," who is no God at all, or in the impersonal absolute of pantheism. Either God is regarded as a Being "cribbed, cabined, and confined," without freedom in any real sense, *or* He becomes an "It," a vast impersonal entity, a fixed order of things, to which all else, including the limited God and man, is subject.

It will be noted that this inacceptable view we have termed the "view which regards God as bound to a fixed scheme of things conceived as *external to Himself*." The emphasis on the italicized words is of the utmost significance. For by inserting them we mean to conserve the truth for which immanence stands. That truth is that Nature's ways are God's ways; that, in other words, the natural is the supernatural mode of working. When God acts, He does not "interfere" with a Nature external to Himself. We may only speak of His "interferences" (ambiguous word) if He is "interfering" all the time. What we call Nature is a manifestation of His activities. Immanence stands for the refusal to "grudge God His own universe"—a view which, as Romanes so well said, is involved in the belief "that there must be something inexplicable or miraculous about a phenomenon in order to its being divine." [76]

Now much confusion may be engendered by the arguments from the freedom of God in regard to this subject of the miraculous unless care is taken to conserve the truth for which immanence stands. In other words it is necessary to ask what precisely is meant by "the Freedom of God," and how this concept is related to the concept of Nature and law.

The argument has frequently been employed in defence of the traditional idea of miracle, that since man by virtue of his free-will has the power to direct and control the laws of Nature to preconceived ends, God cannot be regarded as being so involved in an unalterable scheme of law as to be less free than man. Indeed it is a tenacious holding to the freedom of God, which impels many to refuse to give up the traditional notion of miracle. The view is still maintained that "miracle," in the old sense, and the "freedom of God" are one and the same truth; that to give up the first is to lose the second. In view therefore of the fact that the concept of the freedom of God is here retained and yet that the traditional miracle idea is here regarded as inacceptable, it is necessary to examine the position with some care.

That man possesses the power to control and direct "nature" need not detain us here. Tennyson spoke of

> "This main miracle, that thou art thou,
> With power on thine own act and on the world." [77]

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[76] *Thoughts*, p. 123.

[77] *De Profundis*.

This is so because man is a being who can in a measure subject "nature" to his own purposes. Carlyle frequently gave expression to the same thought. "The true inexplicable God-revealing Miracle lies in this," he said, "that I can stretch forth my hand at all; that I have free Force to clutch aught therewith."[78] "Man himself," St. Augustine said, "is a greater wonder than any wonder done through his instrumentality."[79] If man, therefore by virtue of his freedom has the energy of initiation, the capacity to act, even to modify and control "the processes of nature," we can accord to God surely no less a power. He cannot be less than man. Such is the argument.

Now this argument has a certain validity, provided too much is not claimed for it. Freedom in man is of the essence of his being. It is integral to his consciousness. He can no more escape his freedom than he can escape himself. To argue against it is like arguing for one's non-existence. At the same time man knows no unlimited freedom. His capacity is conditioned by the scheme of Nature of which he forms a part. He may indeed subdue Nature, but only by obeying her. He cannot be said to violate "laws." He can utilize them, as for example when he directs the flowing stream into his factory and harnesses the force of gravity in order to grind his corn and to light his house. He cannot even be said to interfere with laws. Such a statement of Mozley in his Bampton Lectures, to which it would not be difficult to cite innumerable parallels from past miracle apologetic, that "physical laws are suspended any time an animate being moves any part of its body,"[80] is to be repudiated as merely fruitful of misconceptions.[81] Man's activities do not "suspend" or "interfere with" laws. Rather, we may say, and certainly with much greater philosophic precision, they *create* laws — that is, they furnish the events which it is the business of science to formulate into "laws." It is only the idea that "laws" are entities in themselves which makes possible such an assertion as that every time we move we suspend laws. We no more suspend laws when we move than when we decide of our own free will not to move. The utilization of personal volition in the latter case as in the former in no way involves "a suspension of physical laws." When, again, man constructs an aëroplane and flies, he cannot be said to suspend or to interfere with the law of gravitation. All the time that he is flying, that law is, if

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[78] *Sartor Resartus* "Natural Supernaturalism."

[79] *De Civ Dei*, Book X, Chap. 12.

[80] Third ed. (1872), p. 129.

[81] It is very unfortunate that such words as "interference" continue to be employed in reference to man's freedom, the endeavour seemingly being to substantiate miracle in the traditional sense. Dr. Goudge says in *The Modern Churchman*, November, 1924, p. 435, that the "occasional interferences" when people act *freely* "are a great deal more serious than the 'occasional interferences' with which miracles are popularly identified, for while the wonder-working God is supposed only to 'interfere' on rare occasions, the wonder-working men and women are *interfering all the time*. (Italics ours.) Thus it is quite idle to strain out the gnat of miracle and swallow the camel of freedom." Dr. Gore likewise says (*Belief in God*, p. 234): "The question of the reality of moral freedom . . . and the question of the credibility of

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Miracles are at bottom one and the same question." Let it be said at once that human freedom does *not* involve interferences with "laws." "Laws" are not entities to be interfered with, they are sequences of mode. Those who are tenacious to maintain that the freedom of man must of necessity mean interference with law are, as it seems to us, confusing things that differ — *Value* and *Mode*. These seem to feel that freedom disappears if it is "explained" as to mode: that if, for example, my actions can be "explained" by a scientific formulation of those "motives," conceived as inevitably resulting in those actions, then my freedom goes, and with it moral responsibility. Now we are not asserting that psychological science is able at present to construct such "laws" to "explain" human activities in all its multifarious ranges — though we believe sufficiently in the rationality of the universe to be unable to maintain that such "laws" are inconstructible. But we do assert that there is an essential fallacy in the argument of defenders of human freedom along the aforesaid lines. That fallacy is that a *value* like that of *freedom* disappears with its "explanation" as to *mode*. On the same argument God disappears when science explains the Genesis and evolution of things. On the same argument beauty, as of a picture, disappears when we "explain" how it was created; in the case of a picture, by what colours and how such are chemically composed, by what mechanical motions on the part of the artist, and by what "motives" his activity in setting to work on the canvas was determined.

If the fallacy inherent in this position be recognized, it will hardly be necessary here to show how the traditional concept of miracle, which is conceived as a "gnat" in comparison with the "camel" of human freedom, involves a similar fundamental confusion. And if human freedom does not negate the universal applicability of "natural law," so neither does the religious concept of the miraculous involve such a negation. Let it be quite frankly acknowledged by those who seek to defend the traditional idea of miracle by means of the "freedom" argument, that science utterly repudiates the notion that the one falls with the other. The unfortunate, and indeed, to our view, indefensible situation is presented to us of some theology claiming biological science as a support for interventionist miracle apologetic when the fact is surely obvious that biological science repudiates *de coeur* such a utilization of her researches and conclusions, and the type of apologetic they are held to sustain.

we may by accommodation of speech say, "acting" as usual. The apple still falls to the ground; the planets still keep their courses. One has only to contemplate for a second the cosmic catastrophe which would result from "interfering with" the "law of gravity" to repudiate instantly both the *use* of such a phrase as "suspension of law," and the whole notion which it adumbrates. It was the contemplation of what was involved in such an "interference" or "suspension" which drew from Lotze the statement: "The annulling of a law of Nature, if it were to take place for a moment, would not only make possible the particular simple event on behalf of which it was decreed, but at the same time, set in confusion all the rest of the world." [82]

The argument from man's freedom to God's freedom is valid in the sense that freedom must be of the essence of His being. He is a personal God. Freedom must be no less integral to His consciousness than our freedom is to our consciousness. Purposive activity and self-revelation must therefore be regarded as essential to the theistic concept of God. In obedience to the necessity of His own nature, which is love, He must be regarded as manifesting Himself to His children. That is the abiding and essential truth for which the term "miraculous" stands. He is a free personal God. This is the vital religious nerve of the belief in the miraculous. Theism can only abide with the recognition of the immanental activity of God in His universe.

But if the argument from God's freedom be held to necessitate "violation of nature's processes," "interferences with nature's order," it is not possible to admit it. Or if that freedom be held to involve two mutually exclusive classes of phenomena, termed natural and supernatural, the first being regarded as subject, and the second incapable by its nature of being subject, to scientific explicability, there seems no way of maintaining it. It has been seen that men cannot be held to "violate" or "interfere with" Nature's laws. An argument therefore which maintains that if man can interfere with Nature's processes, so *à fortiori* can God, falls to the ground.

But, so the argument might be continued, though for this interference *man* is not competent, the omnipotent Creator of all must be; and that if this possibility be not admitted for Him, we are shutting Him up within the prison of Nature. This figure of the "prison bars" of Nature's laws, and similar figures, have been very frequently employed by apologists in the past, who have sought by their use of it to establish the necessity of a conception of miracle which involves "interference with" these laws. Trench, for example, may be quoted as one of very many who felt impelled to maintain such a thesis: "Were there no other purpose in the miracles than this, namely, to testify the liberty of God . . . were it only to break a link in that chain of cause and effect which else we should come to regard as itself God, as the iron chain of an inexorable necessity, binding Heaven no less than earth, they would serve a great purpose, they would not have been wrought in vain." [83]

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[82] *Microcosmus*, Vol. I, p. 451.

It is to be maintained, in opposition to this, that the concept of personality in God can be retained without involving that of His interference with these descriptive formulations which science calls "laws." This may be regarded as the central modern issue in the whole discussion on miracle. Is theism compatible with our inability and unwillingness to declare that any events constitute an interference with "laws"? Our answer here is in the affirmative. An endeavour to substantiate in fuller measure this contention, crucial to the issue, seems to be called for. Along two mutually complementary lines of approach we shall seek to maintain our position. *First*, by a coherent philosophy of the terms "natural law," "cause," "natural," and "supernatural." *Second*, by an examination of the implicates of the developed religious and moral consciousness.

First. In our endeavour to show the inadequacy of mechanistic naturalism, it was held that the term "natural law" cannot any longer be regarded as connoting either *necessity* or as an entity in itself. The recognition of this by science, as has been frequently emphasized, marked a distinct stage in the miracle controversy, rendering as obsolete the "miracles are impossible" dogmatism.

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[83] *Notes on the Miracles* (6th ed.), p. 20. See also a similar French defence of the traditional concept of miracle in *La Vérité Chrétienne et le Doute Moderne* (Paris, 1879). "*Nous croyons à la possibilité des miracles parce que nous croyons à la liberté de Dieu, et nous croyons à la liberté de Dieu, parce que nous croyons à la liberté de l'homme —Ces deux libertés sont solidaires.*" (*Op. cit.*, p. 292.)

It is of the utmost importance that theistic philosophy should itself discard a concept of "law" so universally discredited by science.

Apologetic, however, has not yet wholly relinquished this discredited concept. This may be seen by an examination of the reasoning adopted to maintain the freedom of God. The giving up of "miracle," as event incapable of being subsumed under law, is still regarded as giving up God's freedom. It is still felt that this surrender involves the belief that natural law becomes God's prison. "Law" therefore is still being regarded as some deterministically-conceived entity in itself, the "operation" of which everywhere throughout the universe would negate the concept of God. At all costs, it is felt, it must be maintained that there is some part of the phenomenal universe where these "laws" do not "operate"; there must be some "gaps" in Nature where God may show His supremacy over them.

In these contentions there is the perhaps unconscious but nevertheless real acceptance of the notion of natural law as a *something* which God must overcome, escape from, or interfere with.

It was from such a discredited concept of "law" that the radical dualism — law and God, natural and supernatural, each regarded as separate entities, and frequently, we fear, viewed, to use Boutroux's words, as "two adversaries struggling in the lists with a view to exterminating one another," [84] — arose. And it is in large measure the prevalence of this concept which perpetuates the rigid duality of natural and supernatural events involved in so much apologetic. Such a dualism has persisted in spite of many hard things that have been said of it by religious philosophers. It was referred to, for example, by Romanes as "manifestly childish," and as "the primitive and uncultured distinction between natural and supernatural." [85]

Now while indeed all who are concerned to defend and retain the concept of personality in God must sympathize with the end such defenders have in mind, in our judgment their *means* to that end are no longer acceptable. Theistic philosophy has no use for a concept of law which is prevalent chiefly in the archives of that

[84] Boutroux, *op. cit.*, pp. 98–99.

[85] *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 124.

admixture of materialistic philosophy and science which used to be termed by theology "science falsely so called."

Causation. More ultimate, however, than the concept of "law" is that of "*causation*," and also, let us add, more difficult of determination. Here, again, however, it is to be maintained that the freedom and personality of God are not surrendered by the refusal to recognize the two mutually exclusive classes of phenomena of traditional miracle apologetic.

Causation, as has already been pointed out, can, since Hume's reasoning, no longer be regarded as a "force" resident in phenomena, and this clarification of the issue sufficiently discredits that determinism which held that matter and motion "explain" everything. Something further must here, however, be said with regard to the relation of this concept of causation to theism.

The point for emphasis is that the concept of causation is a necessity of thought. It is not dependent upon or created by the observed uniformity of Nature, with which, *strictly speaking*, it has nothing to do. This fact will be realized by indulging in a "supposition contrary to fact." Let us suppose, for example, that phenomena were to be presented to our minds as wholly chaotic and disorderly, that the constitution of things defied any effort at prediction; we should not be absolved from the inner necessity of positing a cause for even the disorderly phenomena. The sun, for example, might be conceived as rising so intermittently and irregularly that no possible prediction could be made as to when it would next appear after setting; but that hypothetical fact would not suggest that there is no *cause* for its rising and setting. Or, to illustrate again; the actions of an irrational mind might defy all our power of predicting what it might do under certain conditions, but these seemingly purposeless actions would not inspire in us the idea that they have no cause. It is impossible to conceive of any event, however irrational, which would suggest to our mind the absence of a causative factor. A chaos as much as a cosmos would to the human mind involve causation.

This leads to the conclusion that the bare idea of causation is not a necessarily theistic idea. The notion can be conceived as consonant with a deistic, with a pantheistic, or with a theistic *Weltanschauung*. The causation of phenomena might have its source, according to deism, in one creative and determining *fiat* of God. Or, according to pantheism, it might have its meaning in an absolute, co-equal and co-extensive and co-exhaustive with phenomena. Or, according to theism, it might have its source in the continuous, orderly, epigenetic activity of God.

The question at once arises: What are the grounds which lead us to reject the former two, and to accept the third, of this trio of possible interpretations of the ultimate source and meaning of the causal concept? A complete answer to that question would necessitate the exposition of the whole rationale of theistic faith, and is therefore beyond the scope of this treatise. The main and the central point germane to the discussion, however, may here be declared. It is, this at least is our own judgment, that causation, theistically conceived, is a *faith* and not a demonstration. The content of this *à priori* idea of causation is *filled out* with the moral and spiritual qualities which it itself intuitively recognizes as the supreme values of life. The wisdom, the justice, the goodness, and the love of God are not conclusions from the phenomena of the universe. They are the presuppositions of those phenomena. In other words they are an interpretation of those phenomena in the light of those noumenal values which the religious consciousness knows to be the ultimate meaning and purpose of things. The lesson which the late Campbell Frazer taught a generation ago is still the truth — theism is not to be "proved," it is a condition of proof. "What are misleadingly called 'demonstrations' and 'logical arguments' that God exists are really more or less successful analyses of the rational constituents of a faith already in germ." [86]

Hence it is that no "proof" can be afforded as to which of the three methods of interpreting causation — the deistic, the pantheistic, and the theistic — is the correct one. The only way to reach a conclusion is through what we regard as the deepest experience of man — his moral and spiritual experience. This at least is the *differentia* of the idea of causation theistically conceived. Theistic metaphysic has an ethical core. The vitalizing centre of its creed is not a process of discursive thought but a faith.

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[86] Lecture II of Part II, *Philosophy of Theism.* Cf. also Tennant, p. 389 of Article in *Harvard Theological Review.*

To theism the moral factor is supreme. Ethical concepts become paramount in its interpretation of the meaning of things, and not concepts of power, of force, or even of mind.

It is just here, to our view, where much past theistic faith buttressed with miracles reveals its inadequacy and imperfection. It is difficult to escape from the conclusion that such was built upon the idea of force or power. God was conceived as first and foremost omnipotence. This "attribute" had to be the major premiss in every process of theistic reasoning. Granted God, "miracles" as intrusions of power into the ordinary, observed scheme of things must be possible — that has ever been the essential traditionalist argument for miracles.

Theistic faith that is true to its own ethical determination, however, must challenge this mode of reasoning. The major premiss cannot be regarded as omnipotence. The religious consciousness repudiates wholeheartedly the idea that there is any morality or spiritual value in that concept. Almost inevitably, in spite of every endeavour to exclude it, the idea of arbitrariness intrudes, and we find ourselves confronted, to use the words of Saintyves, with "*le régime de l'arbitraire érigé en idéal; Dieu assimilé à quelque sultan oriental.*" [87]

Causation, however, theistically, and not deistically, conceived is ethical and not arbitrary. The theist does not therefore surrender his faith because he can discover no "interferences" with law. It has already been seen that no metaphysic can prove or instance such, and that fact is no shock to our moral theism, though it must be a shock to that deistic theism which made central to its creed the interruptions, the interventions, the interferences, the violations. No such interference can ever be proved, and an ethical theism, such is our view, need suffer no alarm in consequence. The observed uniformity of things to the ethical theist is but the manifestation of the order and consistency of God, with whom there is no "variableness neither shadow that is cast by turning."

"*Natural*" *and* "*supernatural.*" An examination of these terms will likewise show that theism can be retained without involving the idea of God's interferences with scientific laws.

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[87] Saintyves, *Le Discernement, etc.*, p. 131.

The sense in which these words has been employed by traditionalist miracle apologetic was that there were two classes of events — the first "natural," capable of being subsumed under scientific laws, the second "supernatural," incapable of such subsumption. The causation of the first was regarded as proximate, mediate, secondary; the causation of the second was regarded as direct, unmediated, primary. It is this sense of the terms that those who are dissatisfied with traditionalist apologetic challenge.

In the first place, it may be maintained that, strictly speaking, there is no justification for speaking of "secondary *causes*." The notion of cause, as applied to the universe, may itself be regarded as negating the notion of "secondary." The only "cause" of which we know anything *directly*, as has already been maintained, is our own. We only know directly our own ability "to act"; it is when we act that something which we call "an effect" happens. Every other "activity" is an *interpretation* on our part, though that fact is seldom remembered when in popular speech it is said that some inanimate object was "acting" so as to "cause" something else. Causality, thus, is only directly real to organic agencies; all other phenomena or effects are *interpreted* in the light of the notion of causality. When for instance I lift a book, I know myself directly to be the cause of the movement of the book. But when I look out of myself at this marvellous universe, beholding its incessant movement — the fast flying clouds on a day of storm, the leaves as they go scurrying helter skelter before the blast, the unresting sea, "the spacious firmament on high" — I am merely concluding, even though I must necessarily conclude, that there is causality for it all. Having gained a belief in "God" (not simply a belief in "a first cause") from the moral and spiritual facts of life, I interpret this already interpreted causality in the light of that belief. In other words I *fill into* this causality, which I have already read into the phenomenal universe, that theistic idea which has come to me from the cumulative weights of all the facts of human and cosmic history. To that notion of a "first cause" in which alone my mind can find a resting place (for otherwise I should be eternally engaged in an intellectual *regressus ad infinitum*, involving an infinite series of contingencies and no stable and self-subsistent reality) has been added, and this addition comes to constitute, with the Christianizing of man's idea of God, its *essential* content, those ideas of perfect goodness, truth, and beauty, which are the presuppositions of the moral and spiritual facts of life. But such an interpretation gives me no justification for differentiating between two types of causality held to be manifested in the phenomenal universe. The differentiation between "secondary" causation and "primary" or unmediated causation is entirely *à priori*. There is no ground for the distinction except in the notion of miracles it is maintained to support. And there is, in our judgment, no place for that notion of miracle save in an apologetic which claimed to be able to discern the two types of causation in the phenomenal universe.

In the second place, it is again necessary to emphasize that, as is now recognized by all metaphysic, even if there were two such mutually distinct classes of phenomena, it is impossible ever to distinguish them. Without perfect knowledge of the constitution of Nature it is impossible to say that there are any events supernatural in this sense. Is there, then, any value for theism in perpetuating a distinction which can never be distinguished?

We recur here to this vital nerve of the whole modern discussion on miracles. Inasmuch as in actual fact this traditionalist distinction cannot be made, what meaning can be given to the terms "natural" and "supernatural" respectively? Here again is the crucial issue confronting modern theology. The fundamental question is *not* whether all the events in the Gospels are exactly recorded facts or no. On the question as to the *historicity* of events some "modernists" are conservative and some traditionalists are liberal. The real issue, however, is not there, though doubtless the researches of historical criticism will have a direct bearing on the ultimate determination of the issue. The real question, however, still remains: it is as to what constitutes a coherent philosophy of the natural and supernatural.

Now to science "Nature" is all-that-is. We do not feel it necessary in the interests of teleology to challenge the right of science to that use of the term, for we recognize that she has ceased to regard the adjective "natural" as interpretative, and now confines it to its legitimate descriptive sense. But what in the interests of theism *has* to be maintained is that the term "supernatural" is not to be used as equivalent to the term "natural."

For if that equivalence were asserted or accepted, we have left for ourselves no term to conserve the truth of the noumenal ground and cause of this Nature. If God be regarded as "just a synonym for Nature," then theism has gone, deism likewise, and the sacred word *God* must be banished to the limbo of discredited anthropomorphisms.

The term "supernatural," however, must still be retained in contradistinction to the term "natural," even when the traditionalist *descriptive* content of the word is rejected. For all-that-is is not the ground of itself. All-that-is is a series of effects: God is the name given to the uncaused cause of all. All-that-is is a transitional objectivity: God is the eternal subjectivity. All-that-is is that upon which the intellect of man works — what Martineau called "the organism of intelligibles"[88]: God is the infinite self-conscious mind.

In the old controversies between "naturalism" and "supernaturalism" what the term "supernatural" should have stood for was not the demand for a part of phenomenal reality distinct by virtue of another kind of causation from the "natural," but the refusal to regard God as coinciding with the phenomenal order of the world. In that same controversy what the term "natural" should have stood for was not that there is no God but Nature, but that Nature is the *whole* of phenomenal reality. The controversy between "natural religion" and "supernatural religion" was in large measure vitiated by the failure to make and to keep clear these distinctions.

A defender or exponent of "natural religion," like Seeley, was in his day greatly misunderstood in consequence of these confusions. His aim and concern was not the denial of the "supernatural" ground of religion: it was the denial of the traditionalist distinction between supernatural and natural religion. In this aim and concern he was, in our judgment, justified by the stage of the controversy. For to the apologist for the "supernatural," supernatural religion was regarded as finding room for itself within that assumed part of phenomenal reality regarded as distinct from Nature. It was based on "miracles." Seeley's justification for calling his religion "natural religion," therefore, lay in the mistaken way in which "supernatural religion" was regarded and defended. The repudiation of that mistaken defence will clear the way for a recognition of the fact that the term "natural" (in the scientific sense) cannot be applied to religion without in the process destroying it. *Rapprochement* will then be possible between "natural" and "supernatural" religion. This will come by the recognition on the part of the "supernaturalists" that it is idle to base a religion on hypothetical intrusions which can never be observed or proved, and by the recognition on the part of the "naturalists" that religion must have its ground and source in a supernatural reality which is not exhausted by or coincident with the scientist's Nature.

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[88] *Study of Religion*, Vol. I, p. 8.

It is instructive to remember that chief among the protesters against "natural religion" was a stalwart theistic thinker like Martineau who was yet at one with the anti-supernaturalists in repudiating the traditional miracle concept. He felt it necessary to maintain against the "natural religion" of Seeley that "the question whether 'Nature' (in the sense of *all that happens*) is indeed the totality of existence is a question not between one mode of happening and another, but between all happenings and the never-happening whence they came, between the time event and its eternal ground, between the phenomenal sum, from end to end, and the non-phenomenal presence without which they cannot emerge into thought at all." Yet, while he was tenacious of a true supernaturalism, declaring that "Nature can never swallow up the supernatural, any more than time can swallow up eternity," he went on to declare that nothing could be more mistaken than to treat the natural and the supernatural as mutually exclusive. "It is no hindrance to theology," he held, "if the laws of nature pursue their undeviating way: it is no hindrance to science if the laws of nature are laws of God; the matter of both studies is furnished by the same relation; only taken up at the opposite ends, so as to render explicit in each case the term which is implicit in the other."[89]

[89] Vol. I, p. 8.

Now we think that here Martineau did less than justice to Seeley, inasmuch as what Seeley *was* thinking about and arguing against was the type of religious apologetic which *did* distinguish "between one mode of happening and another." Furthermore, Seeley himself maintained Martineau's thesis. "If we have learnt to see our God in Nature rather than outside Nature," he said, "it does not follow that we are to regard Him as limited by Nature." [90] This doubtless was not the main emphasis, but at least it shows that he was not altogether forgetful of the philosophic issue.

Nevertheless, we recognize Martineau's essential thesis here as requiring continual emphasis. Seeley and others protested against the dualistic division of phenomena which was involved in the "supernaturalism" of the day. But Martineau's was a protest which is necessary in *every* age — the protest against failure to distinguish between phenomenal happenings and the supernatural ground of all, God.

The conclusion thus to be drawn from these investigations into the use of the terms "natural law," "causation," and "natural" and "supernatural," is that theism is consonant with the inability to maintain the traditionalist division of phenomena into two classes, termed "natural" and "supernatural" respectively.

Second. In the second place, an endeavour must now be made to show that this conclusion is strengthened by an examination of the implicates of the moral and religious consciousness.

It is never to be forgotten that the objections to "miracle" have arisen by no means solely from an attitude hostile to religion or to Christianity. There is the religious objection to "miracle" as well as the scientific. By those who speak the language and think the thoughts of religion, as well as by those who speak the language and think the thoughts of science, the traditionalist concept of miracle has been not infrequently repudiated.

All conceptions of miracles as interventions of supernatural power into the natural order of things, or as violations and abrogations of that order, are felt by the religious consciousness

[90] *Natural Religion*, p. 260 (1st ed., 1882).

to imply unworthy conceptions of God. And this from different points of view.

First of all, such notions are felt to imply a *disorderliness* and *arbitrariness* in the scheme of things, which to many religious minds is felt incompatible with our knowledge of Him "in whom there is no variableness, neither shadow which is cast by turning." It is not found to be religiously helpful to be assured that there are events called miracles which are not subject to scientific explanation, — in other words, not capable of orderly formulation. God is a God of order. "While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Genesis 8 : 32). Speaking of the works of Nature the psalmist said: "He hath also established them for ever and ever. He hath made a decree which shall not pass away" (Psalms 148 : 6). God did not, said the writer of *The Wisdom of Solomon* destroy the pursuing Egyptians by miraculously created wild beasts of monstrous power — because "by measure and number and weight Thou didst order all things" (Wisdom, 11 : 17–20). It is then no indication of a developed religious consciousness to declare that God is only or especially manifest in the gaps, the breaches of Nature's orderly processes. Miracles, as so often conceived, are unworthy of God. "*Nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus.*" God, as Origen was able to agree with Celsus in maintaining, "is not the God of discordant desires, nor of error and disorder." [91]

It is unfortunate that the repudiation of this disorderly and arbitrary concept of miracle has most frequently come from those who were conceived as the opponents of the Christianity of their day: unfortunate, we say, because as a consequence, many have come to conclude that this arbitrariness and disorderliness are inherent in a Christian view of the universe. Rousseau, in the person of his famous Vicaire Savoyard, said, "*C'est l'ordre inaltérable de la nature qui montre le mieux la sage main qui la régit: s'il arrivait beaucoup d'exceptions, je ne saurais plus qu'en penser; et pour moi, je crois trop en Dieu pour croire à tant de miracles si peu dignes de lui.*" [92] Voltaire, whose motto was "*écrasez*

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[91] *Contra Celsum*, Book V, c. 24.

[92] *Émile*, Vol. II, p. 77 (Nelson ed.).

l'infâme," and who included in "*l'infâme*" the generally accepted miracle-notion of his day, put his objection with a characteristic undertone of mocking satire in this arresting way: "*On demandait un jour à un philosophe ce qu'il dirait s'il voyait le soleil s'arrêter, c'est-à-dire si le mouvement de la terre autour de cet astre cessait; si tous les morts ressuscitaient, et si toutes les montagnes allaient se jeter de compagnie dans la mer, le tout pour prouver quelque vérité importante, comme, par example, la grace versatile? Ce que je dirais, répondit le philosophe, je me ferais manichéen; je dirais qu'il y a un principe qui défait ce que l'autre a fait.*" [93] The same prince of "moqueurs" affirmed that to believe in miracles was really to insult and dishonour God. And certainly if miracles be conceived as a violation of those ordered and orderly ways of Nature in which the religious consciousness sees the God of order controlling His universe, it is difficult, indeed to our view impossible, to rebut the contention.

It is this disorderly and arbitrary concept of miracle which most modern philosophy of religion finds it so difficult to accept. It impelled Hoffding, for example, to say, "The concept of miracle is dangerous from the religious as well as from the scientific standpoint. It is a bastard which neither parent can afford to own." [94] Such a judgment has been quite freely and frequently maintained by philosophers who are at the same time religious. Schleiermacher gave forcible expression to the same view when he said: "It is commonly supposed that an event which lies outside the fixed order of nature and which cannot, therefore, be accounted for by natural causality, has a special religious value because the Divine causality is demanded for its explanation. But this is to suppose that the religious sphere lies outside of the universal order of relations, making the *religious* synonymous with the *arbitrary* and exalting the quality of arbitrariness to the rank of a Divine attribute. Nay, it does more; it separates God from the world and makes a religious view of the world impossible. It is destructive of science and of religion too." [95]

Then, further, such notions of miracle are open to the charge that they reveal a God of *favouritism* or *partiality*. The difficulties for thought in the problem of providence, the existence of evil, etc., are quite great enough without adding to their weight the intolerable burden of such a view. Much apologetic for the traditional idea of miracles has had latent within itself this "intolerable burden." Such Old Testament "miracles" as the sign of the dew on Gideon's fleece, the sign on Hezekiah's dial, etc., have frequently been regarded as "condescensions to human faithlessness and weakness, rather than as instances of God's normal method of revelation."[96] "Such signs," it has been held, "are offered only to weak or prejudiced persons."[97] In such utterances can be seen the inner conflict within such miracle apologetic, a conflict which is the presage of its own ultimate disappearance. On the one hand there is the instinctive repudiation of the kind of faith which requires such "signs." On the other hand there is the conservative desire to maintain the historicity of such incidents. The result of this inner conflict was to regard such events as "concessions," "condescensions" on the part of God. But the main question, the insistent question, which to the modern mind cannot be burked, is, What kind of a God do such "concessions" and "condescensions" necessitate? A God who makes concessions for some, condescensions for others, is not the God whom Christ has revealed to us, nor the God in whom many find it possible to believe. To speak of such narrated events as the plagues, the miracles of the desert, the crossing of the Jordan, and the fall of the walls of Jericho, as "proofs of Moses' mission" and as "acts of God's favour and of His vengeance,"[98] has been to create a burden which faith in God neither will nor is able to bear. If God is held to contravene Nature's processes *here*, at once the question arises, then why not *there?*[99] If omnipotence can defeat the sequences of Nature at one point of time, then why not at another? Should the answer be given to such questions that it is not for us in time to comprehend the eternal purposes of God, most will bow at once in the presence of a recognized truth; but it is necessary to add that the reverent acceptance of mystery does not require us to accept a notion of miracle which necessitates an *addition* to our difficulties. Religious faith has the absolute assurance that the truest "definition" of God is that He is love, and that that love embraces, without discrimination, all mankind. Whatever may be the difficulties in the way of that assurance, nevertheless it endures and *must* endure as long as man continues to be religious. The major premiss in every theistic reasoning is the *love* of God. If in the interests of His omnipotence this "attribute" be relegated to a subsidiary place, the essential content of theistic faith has been obscured if not indeed repudiated. Any process of reasoning in the defence of miracle which places power, not love, on the throne of the universe is hostile to religion.

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[93] *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, Article, "Miracles."

[94] *The Philosophy of Religion*, Eng. tr., p. 29.

[95] See *The Theology of Schleiermacher*, Cross, p. 159.

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[96] See *The Place of Miracles in Religion*, Lyttelton (1899), p. 21.

[97] G. A. Smith, *Isaiah*, Vol. I, p. 113.

[98] Lyttelton, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

[99] It was moral repudiation of this notion of miracle which impelled the heated rejoinder of the late Professor G. B. Foster: "The God who would change water into wine for the sake of a wedding, but would not suspend the nature of fire to save little children from being burnt to death is not a moral God from the point of view of the modern man, and there is no use in trying to make him believe it" (*Chris-*

"... Such may wreck
My life and ruin my philosophy."[100]

This means, ultimately, that divinity is construed through goodness. It is not to be concluded that because evil and suffering exist therefore God is not good. The conclusion is that the notion which conceives God as able "miraculously" (in the old sense) to prevent these evils and that suffering is false. If, then, it is stated that in one specific case He intervened in the natural order by setting aside its laws, in order to achieve a specific end, for example, the removal of an evil from a good person or the visiting of a penalty upon the evil person, the inevitable reply is: What He does now He ought to do always; and if He does not do it

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tianity in Its Modern Expression (New York, 1921), p. 112). I am not quite sure what Professor Foster meant to signify by the last "it." If by that "it" he meant to refer to the idea that such a God as is suggested was a moral God, we entirely agree with him. But if by that "it" he refers to the event narrated by St. John, we must point out that even if that narrative was historical, it does not of necessity involve the idea of a "God who would change water into wine for the sake of a wedding." We are not pleading for the precise historicity of this narrative of St. John: we are merely pointing out that a narrated event may be a fact even if false supernatural views have been used to interpret it.

[100] Browning in *A Bean-Stripe.*

always He cannot be good. This conclusion seems to be forced upon those who maintain a concept of miracle which regards God as occasionally contravening natural sequences for the advantagement of specific individuals or nations. But since that conclusion is repudiated by the religious certainty that God is love, without discrimination of persons, such a conception of miracle must also be regarded as repudiated by the religious consciousness.

The belief that in certain events the intervening hand of God may be seen frustrating the natural order is nevertheless very widespread and very deep-seated. This belief sees in suffering and calamity specific judgments of God. Though repudiated by that immortal dramatization of religious philosophy, the Book of Job, it is so firmly intrenched within the minds of men that it seems impossible entirely to eradicate it. From one point of view this fact may be regarded as a witness to the indestructible belief of humanity in God. But from another point of view it is indicative of mental laziness and spiritual lethargy: it is a refusal to think clearly and deeply with regard to beliefs about God. The disciples of Christ inherited this "orthodox" belief, which the Book of Job revealed as so "heretical." They manifested it by their question regarding the blind man, "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" — to which their Lord's answer was, "Neither did this man sin nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (John, 9:2–3). The same attitude belonged to those to whom Christ, speaking of the Galileans "whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices," addressed the question: "Think ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they have suffered these things?" "Or those eighteen, upon whom the Tower in Siloam fell, and killed them, think ye that they were offenders above all the men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay" (Luke, 13:1–5). It was moral indignation against such intolerable views which inspired Voltaire's *Lisbon*. "Why," he asked, "is Lisbon engulfed, while Paris, no less wicked, dances?" A similar moral and spiritual shock was caused by a papal utterance in 1909 which, speaking of the earthquake at Messina and Reggio, in which 200,000 Italians were destroyed, referred to "the paralytic and leprous society now existing which has come to consider such punishments as phenomena of nature."[101] This belief also sees in remarkable natural "deliverances" the intervening hand of omnipotence, setting aside natural laws which left to themselves would have brought calamity. The missionary boat is "miraculously" saved from colliding with the iceberg, stayed in its course only one foot away.[102] Such and kindred stories have been, and still are, told with the most assured conviction that God is intervening by setting aside Nature's processes. And the difficulty of His *non-intervention* never seems to trouble such minds.

Such are among the considerations which lead many to discard the traditional notion of miracle. They cannot believe that God "miraculously" contravenes natural sequences in specific instances. One writer has written of recent years, for example, on the thesis: "Miracle inconsistent with Christianity."[103] Another has said that "it was not the Liberal Theologians, but the War, which killed belief in the miraculous. The frequent and persistent question: 'Why does not God stop the War?' compelled many Christian English men and women to conclude: 'Either there is no God at all, or He does not care, or else if there be a God and He have the mind of Christ, He cannot and will not work miracles.'"[104]

These contentions, it must be admitted, come home with considerable force to the *religious* consciousness. Our concern at this point is not with the difficulties which science and metaphysics place in the way of the traditional idea of miracles. This idea is being here confronted with the positive assurances of religious faith. These assurances, inextricably conjoined as they are with our moral judgments, compel many to reject "miracle." Not few are those who agree with M. Paul Sabatier when he wrote: "If by miracle we understand either the suspension or subversion of the laws of nature, or the intervention of the First Cause in certain particular cases, I could not concede it. In this negation, physical and logical reasons are secondary; the true reason — let no one be surprised — is entirely religious; the miracle is immoral."[105] These are strong, sincere words. Their sincerity and truth will be recognized by all who have sought to assist the perplexed truth-seekers of this generation. This is a protest not of science but of religion. Christian apologetic must, we believe, come to recognize that these objections to the traditional miracle notion have their source, not in anti-Christian conceptions of reality, but in the deep moral and religious instincts of humanity, brought to their present stage of enlightenment by the teaching and spirit of Christianity.

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[101] Cf. Saintyves, *Le Discernement, etc.*, p. 203.

[102] Cf. Christlieb, *op. cit.*, p. 335.

[103] Miss Dougall in article in *Hibbert Journal*, January, 1921.

[104] *The Modern Churchman*, January, 1921, p. 510.

The reply might be made to these contentions — with a view to abating their weight — that the idea of revelation confronts the human mind with the same suggestion of the partiality or favouritism of God — in so much as that notion necessitates His "speaking" to specific people, at specific times in history. It must, however, be pointed out that revelation, properly conceived, does not presuppose a concept of God as setting aside any natural laws in the interests of specific individuals or nations. It leads indeed to the inscrutable mystery of God's guidance, but does not carry with it the objection which this notion of miracle involves, namely, that God's omnipotence sets aside the orderly course of Nature, of which He is the ground and cause, in the interests of some and not of all. Revelation, in truth, may speak of "chosen" nations or "chosen" individuals, but not in the sense that natural sequences are set aside for their benefit; only in the sense that to them, in the divine leading of mankind, have come in ways quite "natural," but yet, in a religious sense, quite truly "supernatural," manifestations of the truth and reality of things.

There is, of course, a notion of revelation and of inspiration against which the same objections as are maintained against the interventionist view of miracle are of valid weight. This is the view which conceived inspiration as a kind of supernatural dictation in which, according to the old Protestant scholasticism, God gave first of all the command to write (*impulsus ad scriben-*

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[105] *Life of St. Francis* (Eng. tr.), p. 433.

dum), then the revelation of what was to be written (*suggestio rerum*), and then the words in which the truth was to be declared (*suggestio verborum*).

This notion of revelation is not able, in our judgment, to escape the charge that it makes man through whom the revelation comes a mere automaton for registering "supernatural" communications. Such a view of revelation seems precisely parallel to Newman's morally-shocking view of miracle. "Miracles," he held, "are the simple and direct work of God; the worker of them is but an instrument or organ. And, in consequence, he need not be holy, because he has not, strictly speaking, a share in the work." He went on to say (and the words have the effect in our mind of seeming to clinch an *immoral concept*) that there is nothing surprising in God's giving to a bad man "the gift of miracles."[106] Here, conjoined to the morally difficult idea that miracle is an abrogation of natural laws, is the utterly intolerable moral difficulty that this abrogation is accomplished sometimes through evil men. *They* are merely passive instruments in the hands of an omnipotence which through them performs "simple and direct" wonders. It does not seem possible, let it be said in passing, to reconcile an apologetic which regarded "miracles" as evidences of the divinity of Christ with the notion that "miracles" may be the gift of God to bad men. The two attitudes seem mutually irreconcilable; they cancel out each other. Old mechanical views of inspiration involved the similar idea that the inspired were but passive instruments. From such artificial notions have sprung so many of the mistaken ways of regarding the Scriptures — notions whose accumulated weight has pressed very heavily upon the thoughtful of this generation.

Likewise, there is a conception of the Church and of Tradition involving views belonging to the same family in which the traditional idea of miracle has its home. In what may be called, by the abuse of a noble word, the "Catholic" view of Church and Tradition, the same radical dualism of natural and supernatural is, to our judgment, latent as in the interventionist, violationist concept of miracle. To such a view Tradition belongs to the

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[106] *Discourses Addressed to Mixed Congregations* (6th ed., 1881), pp. 367–68.

"supernatural" order, as distinguished from the "natural" order of "secular" history. The *depositum fidei* is handed down under "supernatural" oversight which controls its course and directs its unchanging perpetuity — *semper, ubique, et ab omnibus*. Likewise the Church is conceived, to this view, as a "supernatural" institution, in contrast with the "natural" institutions which serve the economic, educational, legislative, and other interests of humanity. The "supernatural" and *essential* being of the Church, to this view, is conceived as consisting in a supernatural "grace," supernaturally communicated through an order of "priests" whose *essential raison d'être* consists in that which differentiates them from the "priesthood" of the ordinary members of the church. Through these "priests" alone is secured the "supernatural" validity of sacraments, which are conceived as communicating their "supernatural" grace *ex opere operato*.

With the decay of the interventionist concept of the supernatural must also in the end, we believe, decay both these "Catholic" concepts of Tradition and of the Church. The fundamental principles of a true Protestant Catholicism will then arise, even though the process must of necessity be slow. The rate of progress will, in our judgment, be determined by the strength with which two factors are allowed to come into operation: *first*, the philosophic spirit in its undogmatic and essentially truth-loving and truth-seeking impulses; and *second*, the religious spirit, with its inner assurance of moral and spiritual certitude. When that distant day arrives, it will be seen that the true "supernaturalness" of "tradition" does not consist either in the *mode* through which that tradition has come down to us or in the dogmatic "supernatural" *depositum fidei* which descends to us through that channel. The true "supernaturalness" of tradition will be seen to consist neither in a specific "mode" nor in a static "depositum": but rather, in the real spiritual values, apprehended by the past, which in the divine over-ruling of history have been mediated to us through the spiritual personalities in every age who constitute the real Church. The "supernaturalness" of dogma will be seen to consist not in what it states as to facts, but in the truth it is capable of awakening in those ages to come which shall be yet further enlightened by the ever-present, ever-guiding spirit of God, who is the Spirit of truth. No timed fears or alarms will then be occasioned by the acknowledgment that tradition has a history like all else which belongs to the past, and that it may be subjected to critical historical scrutiny without detriment to what is truly "supernatural" within it. It will be seen, further, that man makes tradition, not that tradition makes man; that he is always learning, ever appropriating in a fuller and deeper measure the eternal values on which the universe is founded, and that a truly scientific view of that tradition reveals the process. It will be seen further that past dogmas, while of great value to present and future ages, because of the transcendent experiences they enshrine, need not be conceived as *absolutely* authoritative for the Church any more than the Roman State is authoritative for the nation; that, in a word, there is good and bad in dogmatic tradition as well as in any other history, and that it is the duty of the living Church, guided by the spirit of truth, to purge the one from the other, to assimilate the kernel and to cast forth the husk. In that day, the "supernaturalness" of the Church will be seen, not to consist in a specific mode or channel (such as is expressed usually by the theory of "apostolic succession") through which its essential being is conserved and propagated. It will be seen to consist in the whole entity of spiritual and moral personalities who in their own day saw the truth, embraced it, and pressed ever forward to that city of eternal values whose builder and maker is God, confessing that they were but pilgrims discerning its reality from afar. The "supernaturalness" of sacrament will be seen to consist in, and be dependent upon, no exterior mechanically supernatural validity. *All* will be supernatural sacrament, by whomsoever mediated, which serves to lead humanity to discern the hidden but manifested mystery of things, to look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, and to know that the former are merely temporal and the latter the eternal.

Having indulged for a few moments these personal prophetic views, our *apologia* for which must be that they have served to unfold our own philosophy of the natural and supernatural as it bears on some of the vexed, theological problems of the day, we return to the thesis we have been maintaining — that a fundamentally ethical theism is not only consonant with the inability to accept the interventionist concept of miracle, but is indeed at variance with that concept as it has been usually stated. In that notion power not goodness is regnant on the throne of the universe. The freedom which it seeks to conserve degenerates in the hands of careless exponents into an arbitrary freedom, and in any case, falls far below the highest type of freedom known to the moral consciousness — the freedom of self-limitation. There is emphasis on "All things are possible to God"; but the infinitely profounder concept that "only those things are possible to Him which His love necessitates" is put in a parenthesis, if not indeed forgotten. It fails to stress that there is a necessity in the heart of the only freedom worthy of the name. It seeks to conserve the priceless truth of the activity of God in His universe, but expresses that truth in such a way as to involve the intolerable moral difficulty of His *non-intervention*. If God can do all things, if He can interfere with Nature's sequences so as to prevent what would otherwise be a calamity, then why, at once the question arises, does He not *always* exercise that power so as to abolish all the evils of Nature? If He can intervene here, then why not there? The "enigma" of theism remains, as it seems to us, an impenetrable gloom if the traditional miracle concept be true. But for those who can whole-heartedly accept the thesis, so ably set forth by Professor Sorley, that "the theistic universe is fundamentally ethical," for those who regard love and not power as the fundamental truth about God, and who, therefore, conceive His freedom as subject to the necessity of love and as embraced in the higher category of self-limitation, we may, without solving all our problems, find our way of escape from an intolerable position. For we may dare frankly to maintain that God "cannot" abolish the "evils" of Nature by means of a violation which renders nugatory all "secondary causes." He, we must conceive, is limited not merely by the freewill of man, but by the order of Nature which He Himself has established, and which is the expression of His own undeviating invariableness. Has not God, asked Martineau, power to bar out the imperfections of the world? "Yes," he replied, "if He lives out of His boundless freedom, and, from moment to moment, acts unpledged, conducting all things by the miscellany of incalculable miracles, there is nothing to hinder His Will from entering 'where it listeth,' and all things will be 'possible to Him.' But if once He commits His Will to any determinate method, and for the realisation of His ends selects and institutes a scheme of instrumental rules, He thereby shuts the door on a thousand things that might have been before. . . . It is vain therefore to appeal to the almightiness of God, unless you mean to throw away the relations of any established universe, and pass into His unconditioned infinitude." [107]

These are the grounds on which is based the refusal to accept the argument that belief in miracle, as the setting aside of Nature's processes, is necessarily involved in belief in God. For that assertion, common to much traditionalist apologetic for miracle, is really, as we hold, a *petitio principii*. Everything depends on what content of meaning is given to the term "God." To say that belief in miracle is involved in belief in God is upon analysis revealed to mean this: it is only possible to accept miracle in the intrusive, interventionist sense if that concept is regarded as essential to belief in God. The question is then seen to be narrowed down to this: *Is* that concept essential to belief in God? Some may regard it still as essential. The difficulty for such apologists, however, is that they demand the recognition of a possibility which there is no way of showing to be an actuality.

In view of the fact that we are still asked by many to retain the traditional miracle concept, it must therefore be shown conclusively that something vital is at stake. The present discussion has not revealed the existence of such. There is no call therefore, as it seems to us, to repudiate the scientific "faith" in the rationality of things. Only a mistaken supernaturalism can demand such a repudiation. This "faith" of science has not been falsified by any facts hitherto observed or verified. Is theology then to be asked to deny to science her right to this faith? In that case theology becomes merely *negative*. She has refused to science *her* faith, while being incapable of taking any stand by her own faith, which seems to be that scientific order has been broken here and there. Such a theology's supreme difficulty, however, is that there is no possibility of proving or discerning such "breaks."

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[107] *Study of Religion*, Vol. II, p. 85.

The recognition of the legitimacy to science of her faith in the rationality of the universe does not, however, involve that everything, to use Renan's words, is "*d'une même couleur dans le monde.*"[108] Both materialistic science and materialistic theology made this mistake. The first made it with a view to denying spiritual meaning to the universe; the latter made it with a view to conserving that spiritual meaning. Value and truth were thus thought to be dependent on mode. An event could only have ultimate value if it came to be by a non-natural mode. A materialistic science denied that there were any such non-natural modes, and hence denied divine purpose. Much theology asserted that there *were* such modes, and, on this assertion, based in considerable measure her right to maintain a theistic faith. The identity of the philosophic principles of these antagonists is, in our judgment, manifest. The first denied God, ultimate truth and value, because of its faith in the principle of "natural causation." The second recognized that this denial was legitimate if that faith in "natural causation" was correct, but asserted that various gaps in law were discernible. It should hardly be necessary to plead again what we regard as the essential fallacy behind both those one-time defended positions. It will suffice our purpose to quote here the acute words of Hoffding on this issue. He asks: "May we not assume that that which is of *highest value* (italics ours) may be reconcilable with the principle of natural causation?" He then goes on to assert what we have been contending for, namely, that the traditional concept of miracle arises from a negative answer to that question: and he adds: "From whence the right to negate is derived, is not easy to discover. The fact that something is of the highest value does not preclude a purely natural origin."[109]

The philosophy of the natural and the supernatural involved in the traditionalist concept of miracle regarded these two as standing, as it were, over against one another; that there are natural causes and supernatural causes, the first being subject to scientific formulation, the second incapable by their very nature of such. "*Le caractère des miracles pris dans le sens le plus rigoureux,*" said Leibniz, "*est qu'on ne les saurait expliquer par les natures des choses créées.*"[110] This "rigorous" view it is in our judgment no longer necessary to defend. It involves a concept of miracle which brings it into open antagonism with what we regard as the legitimate claims of science. That concept is that the necessary mark of miracle is its incapability of being fitted into scientific law,[111] — a concept which is inadmissible by science, and not only unnecessary for religion, but, as many regard the matter, positively at variance with the truths she gives.

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[108] *Souvenirs, etc.* (Nelson ed.), p. 243.

[109] *The Philosophy of Religion* (Eng. tr., 1906), p. 29.

The traditional idea of miracle necessitates on the part of those who defend it the admission that if their "miracles" should ever become scientifically explicable, theistic faith becomes discredited. As the frontiers of scientific inquiry advance, the area of the miraculous becomes thus more and more restricted. The only hope left to such defenders of miracle is that science may find herself confronted with such difficulties in the way of her advance as to leave some space for themselves wherein to dwell in permanent security.

The history of scientific progress in the past affords no sure hope that a stable refuge of this character will be attained. At one time the refuge was the belief in a method of creation conveniently designated by the phrase "the *fiat* of a creative act." Evolutionary theories have compelled the relinquishment of that refuge. Today it is held by many that the gulf between the living and the non-living gives a safe refuge from which to assert the necessity of a scientifically inexplicable and unexplorable creative *fiat*. Though dogmatism here is inadvisable, the future discoveries of science might quite conceivably compel the relinquishment of that refuge. Driven further into retreat, some will seek in the gulf between the unconscious and the conscious, or further back still, in the gulf between the conscious and the self-conscious, the refuge of scientifically inexplicable supernatural intrusion. All such refuges are, however, to scientific faith, by their very nature, transitional, and therefore delusive. And along these lines there is, to our view, little hope for a philosophically sound religious apologetic. It is not by limiting the possibility of scientific descriptive formulations that security is to be reached. Where then shall it be found? Not surely in calling to science, like Canute to the advancing tide: "Thus far and no further"; but in asking of science, "What is your essential *raison d'être?* What do you really seek to do? What are your functions, what your aims, and what your limits?" This has been our general line of thought in regard to the matter. This has dictated and necessitated the distinction between "miracle" as *fact*, and the miraculous or supernatural idea. And it involves, as it seems to us, a repudiation of the old view of miracle as a scientifically inexplicable intervention of the supernatural.

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[110] *Theodicée*, 207. (*Œuvres de Leibniz* (Paris ed., 1842, 2 vols.), Vol. II, p. 199.)

[111] It would not be difficult to multiply citations to show that the traditional notion of miracles involves this "necessary mark of the miraculous." Reference may be made to the utterances quoted on page 122. The following also may be added. "From its very nature as an immediate Divine operation, the miracle admits no explanation of mode or process. All such attempts are self-contradictory. They are suggestions of secondary reasons or causes for that which *ex hypothes* has only a Great First Cause" (Laidlaw, *The Miracles of Our Lord* (1890), p. 32).

Further, we cannot but feel that the attitude of ill-at-ease defence required by this interventionist philosophy of miracle is totally unworthy of the *final* truths of the universe for which religion stands. Religion confronts the universe with enthusiasm and conviction. She *knows*, this at least is the assertion of religious experience, that God acts *immediately* in His world. But this immediacy of divine action does not mean the lack of phenomenal antecedents. It means the use of such to accomplish *immediate* ends in the mind and heart of God. That God immediately acts, and yet that that activity, that revelation, when perceived or appropriated by the religious consciousness in person or event, does not involve the absence of "second causes" or "phenomenal antecedents," are thus the two convictions which have been here maintained. If these two convictions are found difficult of reconciliation, is it not in consequence of doubtful views of God and Nature, handed on to man from the past, which almost in spite of himself form the background of his thinking? Romanes in that pregnant posthumous volume, *Thoughts on Religion*, was very near, as we feel, to the solution of the difficulty. He held that the conflict of science and religion had always arisen from a fundamental postulate which both sides maintained, but which was "highly dubious." That hypothesis or fundamental postulate was, as he expressed it: "If there is a personal God, He is not immediately concerned with natural causation"; and he went on to maintain the position we have sought to establish — "that it is no argument against the divine origin of a thing, event, etc., to prove it due to natural causation." [112] A somewhat similar point of view may be cited from a more recent writer. "The true field of the principle of continuity is the total history in time, the total evolution of the universe. And as so viewed it is simply one way of apprehending the essential rationality of God and of the divine action in Nature and in history. In this — and I think only in this — lies the basis for a worthy constructive doctrine of miracle." [113]

If it were possible persistently and consistently to maintain such a view, many, if not most, of the difficulties in regard to the miraculous would disappear. We say "persistently" and "consistently," for such views have frequently been maintained sporadically and in fragmentary fashion. Those who have maintained, for example, that Nature's laws are to be regarded as God's *modes of working* have really been saying what Romanes said. St. Augustine in a frequently quoted passage gives an almost modern statement of this view. "How is that contrary to Nature," he asks, "which happens by the Will of God, since the Will of so mighty a Creator is certainly the nature of each created thing? A portent therefore happens not contrary to Nature, but contrary to what we know as Nature."[114] St. Augustine sets forth the same position elsewhere when he says: "God the Author and Creator of all Natures, does nothing contrary to Nature. . . . There is, however, no impropriety in saying that God does a thing contrary to Nature when it is contrary to what we know of Nature . . . but against the supreme law of Nature . . . God never acts, any more than He acts against Himself."[115]

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[112] Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 119–21.

[113] *The Study of Nature and the Vision of God*, G. J. Blewett, footnote to p. 53. The whole of this footnote of Blewett is well worth studying. He says: "In insisting upon the continuity of nature, men of Science have been better theologians than the theologians themselves. . . . If the theologians would be true to theology, what they have to do is to protest, not against the principle of continuity, but against too narrow a reading of it and too narrow an application of it to reality."

In the interests of clarity it is important to note the *exact* meaning of this historically famous position of St. Augustine. It seems therefore necessary to subject it to a more detailed scrutiny. Nothing, he says, can be contrary to the Nature of things which, from the religious point of view, is the will of God, or God's mode of working. He then distinguishes this "Nature of things" from "what we know of Nature," and makes room for the miraculous in the gap which exists between these two. The first position is to us acceptable: the second is inacceptable.

St. Augustine had a very great deal to say about miracles; his numerous references to the subject show how deeply it exercised his mind — as indeed it has exercised the minds of every profound philosophic and religious thinker since. No writer on the subject can afford to overlook him. His famous and much quoted position is really, however, in our judgment, a twofold position. It is because it looks in two directions that writers with very different views of the miraculous are found quoting him to claim his support for their severally divergent positions. This very fact should engender caution in seeking a just estimate as to his position. It is not necessary to press unduly here the fact, not always remembered, however, that Augustine accepted, like many other subsequent philosophic theologians whose names are frequently conjured with,[116] all the "miracles" of scripture as having happened exactly as reported;[117] though this oversight tends, to say the least, to give a mistaken view as to what exactly his position was. It is, however, the duty of anyone who would elucidate Augustine's position to point out what, to our view, are the *fallacies* in his arguments in favour of these miracles. The arguments which he utilizes in their support *must* be held to throw a revealing light on his whole position; to deny this, would involve the assertion that Augustine argued about "miracle" in *vacuo* — an ever present danger indeed, but not one which can be attributed to Augustine.

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[114] *De Civ. Dei, Book* 21 : 8.

[115] *Contra Faustum*, 26 : 3.

[116] *E.g.*, Bishop Berkeley accepted the "Miracles recorded in Scriptures" as "always wrought for confirmation of some doctrine or mission from God." He held also that Moses' rod "was changed into a real serpent" and the water of Cana of Galilee "into real wine." See his *Works* (4 vols., Oxford, 1871), Vol. III, p. 115, and Vol. I, p. 199.

What, then, is his argument in favour of these "miracles"? It comes, we believe, to this: *that everything in the universe is wonderful, and that to reject a scriptural miracle because it is wonderful is therefore unreasonable.* Augustine continually exhorted people to awake to the marvellousness of such natural events as the birth of a baby into the world; and for that emphasis we should thank him sincerely, so dull in most people is the sense of wonder. "Even the very things which are most commonly known as natural would not be less wonderful nor less effectual to excite surprise in all who beheld them, if men were not accustomed to admire nothing but what is rare."[118] But when he uses this to substantiate the historicity of a narrated "miracle," it is impossible to follow him. The narrated miracle may or may not be historical fact — that is not the point. The point is that there is a fundamental fallacy in claiming the historicity of a narrated "miracle" on the ground that it is not more "wonderful" than events which happen every day. "A dead man rose again; men marvelled: so many are born every day, and no one marvels. If we consider more thoughtfully it is a greater miracle for one to be who was not, than for one to come to life again, who was."[119] Again he says with reference to the Lazarus raising: "If by Him were all things made, what wonder is it if one was raised to life by Him, when so many are every day brought into existence by Him? It is more to create men than to resuscitate."[120] Whether it is "more" to create than to resuscitate, we are of course not competent to say. We can at least acknowledge that both effects are very "wonderful," that is, they compel the thoughtful to realize that there are mysteries in events which the mere fact of their occurrence by no means obliterates. But for a reported event — such as a "resurrection" — to excite wonder in the thoughtful by no means involves its historicity, nor, if its historicity is established, does it involve that it is any the less scientifically explicable than an ordinary or customary event — like the birth of a babe. Now Augustine's treatment of "miracle" involved both these inacceptable ideas. On the one hand he seems to claim that the fact that ordinary events are just as "wonderful" as "miracles" substantiates the historicity of the latter. This by no means follows. Writers as opposed to Augustine's view of "miracles" as Voltaire have emphasized the same fact — that there is mystery in the most ordinary. "*L'ordre prodigieux de la Nature, la rotation de cent millions de globes autour d'un million de soleils, l'activité de la lumière, la vie des animaux, sont des miracles perpétuels.*"[121] The fact of such emphasis by writers of the type of Voltaire is sufficient to show that there is no necessary connection between recognizing the wonderfulness of ordinary events and claiming the historicity of specific "miracles." On the other hand, Augustine's view of "miracle" demands that it be in a quite different category from ordinary events. It is "*beside* the usual course and order of Nature."[122] It has, unlike ordinary events, no "secondary causes" to "explain" it; the immediate volition of God is alone adequate for its occurrence. "*Habet ergo deus in se ipso absconditas quorundam factorum causas, quas rebus conditis non inseruit; easque implet non illo opere providentiae quo naturas substituit ut sint, sed illo quo eas administrat et voluerit, quas ut voluit condidit.*"[123] Such words involve from the scientific point of view the idea that "miracles" are scientifically inexplicable, and from the religious point of view that God's activity in them is of a different kind from that in ordinary events.

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[117] See *De Civ. Dei, Book* 10: 8, etc.

[118] *De Civ. Dei, Book* 21: 8.

[119] "On St. John" (2 vols., in Pusey's *Library of the Fathers*, Vol. I, pp. 123–24).

[120] *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 648–49 (St. John).

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[121] Article, "Miracles," in *Dict. Phil.*

[122] See "On St. John" (Pusey's *Library of the Fathers*, Vol. I, p. 373).

[123] Cf. *De Genesi ad Litteram*, IX, 23.

Thus the statement of Augustine that nothing can be contrary to Nature, while correct, is delusive. For he goes on to fit "miracles" into the unbridgable gaps of our scientific knowledge of Nature. He thus inevitably leads to the later Thomist rigid dualism of the natural and the supernatural, in the sense of radically different classes of phenomena.

That there are such gaps in scientific formulation, no scientist indeed would nowadays deny. That there will always be such gaps is, to say the least, a very considerable possibility. But the fact that scientific rationality has not everywhere been proved does not mean that it is *dis*proved. The scientist's faith in a describable order has not been rendered invalid by his inability to describe exhaustively "the wind which bloweth where it listeth." To say that it is the necessary mark of the miraculous to be "scientifically inexplicable" is an unnecessary and perilous leap in the dark. Against this notion of miracle Spinoza's rejoinder to Oldenburg seems to us to be valid. "With you, I acknowledge human infirmity. But allow me on the other hand to ask, whether or no we poor mortals have so much knowledge of the world as enables us to say precisely how far the power of Nature extends, and to speak positively of aught that transcends this power? Now, as no one could venture, without presumption to give an answer here, so may we be permitted, without being held guilty of arrogance, to say that it is legitimate to explain miracles, in so far as this may be done, by natural causes; and as regards those that can neither be so explained nor shown to be absurd, that it were better to suspend our judgment concerning them, and to assume, as I have said, the excellence of the doctrine as the sole ground of our religious conclusions." [124]

It is to be noted in conclusion that increasingly today the concept of miracle as a scientifically inexplicable intrusion of the first cause into the natural scheme of things is being, whether for good or ill, implicitly given up. This may be seen in different ways. It used, for example, to be part of the Protestant apologist's defence of the miraculous to show why miracles no longer happened. "The cessation . . . of miracles was as

[124] Cf. Letter 23 (in Willis, *op. cit.*, pp. 266–67).

needful as their occurrence; and we no longer look to meet with them in ordinary life,"[125] was the usual Protestant contention, as maintained in these words by the late Dr. Illingworth. Mozley also in his Bampton Lectures felt it necessary to urge that there was "a sound and sufficient reason" for scepticism towards what he called "hodiernal miracles," "viz. that the great end for which miracles were designed is now accomplished"; and "that we are now living under that later providential era, and amidst those results, to which miracles were the first step and introduction."[126] With the present soundness or otherwise of his reason for this scepticism, we are not now concerned. The point for emphasis is the very fact that such a notion of miracle made it necessary for traditional apologetic to demand their cessation.

With this attitude may be compared one frequently manifested today, namely, that there is no reason why miracles should not be performed in our own time. Christians, for example, one modern Protestant writer contends, should "know themselves called to what even the average observer would regard as miraculous work." "The only 'supernatural' that is worth defending, the only 'supernatural' that will not be a burden on faith but its inspiration, is the supernatural as a permanent factor in that life of spiritual adventure which is practical Christianity."[127]

Now between the attitude which seeks to show why "miracles" no longer happen, and that which seeks to set forth the reason why they should continue to happen, there is a very considerable gulf fixed. That gulf is no less than a totally different conception of the mode by which God works, and involves a quite radical change in regard to the miraculous idea. It is well that this fact should be frankly faced. Not until it is can there be any secure hope of clarifying the present turbidity of thought on miracle, and of healing, if that be possible, the still acute dissensions.

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[125] Illingworth, *Divine Immanence* (cheap ed.), p. 68.

[126] *Op. cit.* (3rd ed.), p. 159.

[127] *Redemption from this World, or the Supernatural in Christianity*, A. G. Hogg, p. viii. See also *The Faith that Rebels*, D. S. Cairns, the main thesis of which is that "nature-miracles" are within the range of faith's powers.

As to the reality and width of this gulf there can, as we think, be no illusions. The attitude which set out with the notion that the miraculous is no longer necessary involved the following ideas: *First*, that Christianity is an isolated and unrelated phenomenon; or at any rate, if related at all, then only to Old Testament history and religion which preceded it. *Second*, it involved the conception of a God who *could* act at certain specific periods in past history and *cannot* at any other time. We use the words *could* and *cannot* intentionally; for this inability of God to act miraculously now is, we conceive, involved in the argument which holds that the miraculous is *no longer necessary*, and which therefore under no circumstances can acknowledge the miraculous as happening today. For the very acknowledgment that the miraculous might happen today would falsify the central idea of the argument which seeks to show that miracles are *no longer necessary*. *Thirdly*, it involved a claim to omniscience, in as far as with strange intellectual immodesty it declared that the miraculous is *no longer necessary!* Who could have the right to speak about a situation in which God's specific activity is *not necessary* save one who saw the end from the beginning and the beginning from the end? The judgment of Kant on this point is well worth quoting. He regarded as a mere "quibble" the idea that "miraculous interposition is no longer necessary" and maintained dryly that this notion "is an assumption of higher knowledge than befits any man." [128]

The attitude, on the other hand, which sets out with the notion that the miraculous is *continually* necessary and should be a "permanent factor" in life and history springs from, we believe, the following ideas: *First*, that Christianity is not the isolated "true" religion as at one time generally conceived, all other religions being regarded as "false." These latter have a specific place in the teleology of the religious history of mankind. The peoples whose religious aspirations have manifested themselves in these religions are not to be regarded as left to any "uncovenanted mercies of God," but are as much in the "covenant" of His never-changing mercy as Christian nations more fortunate in the religious revelation in Christ which is their heritage. *Secondly*, it springs from a conception of a God who can and does act now as well as then, among all peoples as well as among one people. He "neither slumbers nor sleeps." He "worketh until now." *Thirdly*, it springs from a deep sense of need — a sense of personal inner disharmony caused by "sin," and a sense of manifold imperfections in the life of humanity in its various spheres. This need *demands the necessity* of the miraculous, unlike the attitude which declares its "innecessity."

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[128] *Theory of Religion within the Boundary of Pure Reason* (Eng. tr.), p. 105.

That the traditional notion of the miraculous is gradually disappearing may be seen in many other ways. Professor Blewett, speaking of the mistaken ways of trying to reconcile religion with science, says: "One of these attempts to 'get past the scientific position' is so fundamentally bad as to deserve special mention — the endeavour to justify belief in God by seeking to find gaps in the continuity of nature." [129] Such attempts, however, at least if we are to accept the judgment of a recent Gifford lecturer, are no longer occupying theology. "Theology," said Professor Pringle-Pattison, "has itself, in great measure, abandoned the conception of a God Who gives evidence of His existence chiefly by spasmodic interferences with the course of events." [130] Baron von Hügel, after maintaining that miracle belongs to the permanent experience of mankind, went on to say: "Grave difficulties arise only when these experiences given by religion . . . are interpreted as meaning that the spiritual or psychical or physical effects of miracle constitute direct breaches within (as it were) the phenomenal rind and level of natural reality. . . . This opinion, if pressed, requires natural science (whose subject-matter is essentially limited to that level and to that constituent of reality or appearance where strict continuity or repetitive law can be found or applied) to discover its object in what suspends or contradicts these characteristics, and hence is outside its special range and cognisance. Whenever such suspension or contradiction could be discovered, Science would have nothing to work upon, and could only wait until it again found something more or less continuous or repetitive." [131]

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[129] *Op. cit.*, p. 53.

[130] *The Idea of God*, p. 90.

[131] *Essays and Addresses* (1st series), p. 58.

With the giving up of that concept of miracle which involved the incapability of a certain class of events being subsumed under law, the ground will be cleared for a worthier statement of theistic faith. Toward that restatement much invaluable work has already been accomplished in Great Britain by a whole series of Gifford lecturers and others. The outlines of a coherent philosophy of theism are beginning to appear. The emphasis on moral and spiritual value is without doubt the dominant feature of this emerging restatement. The task is not complete, and probably, let it be said, never will be complete. For it is no less than the endeavour to achieve a coherent unifying philosophy of the dualities of experience — the supernatural and the natural, spirit and matter, eternity and time, good and evil, God and man. "The revelation of the unity which pervades all things, even in the natural world," said the late Sir Henry Jones, "will be the last attainment of Science; and the reconciliation of nature and man and God is still further in the future, and will be the last triumph of philosophy."[132] Yet the task in each successive age is taken up in faith that the goal is not an illusion, but a reality. It is our hope that the clarification of the issues we have here attemped may be a step on the road to that goal.

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[132] *Browning as a Philosophical and Religious Teacher* (cheap ed.), p. 86.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER V

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DR. F. R. TENNANT'S POSITION AND SUBSIDIARY REFERENCE TO THE POSITIONS OF BADEN POWELL, MOZLEY, AND WENDLAND

The most recent endeavour in England to deal with the philosophical presuppositions behind the notion of miracle is that of Dr. F. R. Tennant. A certain amount of controversy has been occasioned by his contentions, both from the side of the scientific world and from the side of "modernist" theology. With a view to a completer elucidation of the issues involved it seems well to include here a critical investigation of his position, and to set forth wherein the standpoint of this thesis differs from his.

His position is set forth in *Miracle and its Philosophical Presuppositions*,[1] in *The Reign of Law*, a paper read before the Modern Churchman's Conference for 1924,[2] and in *Theism and Laws of Nature*, a paper in the *Harvard Theological Review* for October, 1924.

The basal presupposition from which Dr. Tennant approaches the subject is that the *à priori* possibility of miracle, in the absolute sense as event due to a different type of causation from that to which are due customary or natural events, is essential to theism. He maintains that theism is only defensible in so far as two types of causation are acknowledged in the universe — a proximate, delegated, mediated, or secondary causation, and a direct, unmediated, and primary causation. The first type of causation is held to cover the "relatively" settled order of Nature; the second is held to cover the absolute or metaphysical miracle. Maintaining this distinction, he finds it necessary, as he says, to "renounce the lead" of the late Professor James Ward. "I simply cannot understand," he says, "his apparent repudiation of delegated activity or secondary causation."[3] For this same reason he criticizes the contention of Wendland, who also finds himself unable to differentiate between a mediate and immediate divine activity. Wendland, in his endeavour to defend both the religious and the metaphysical concept of miracle, seems to Dr. Tennant to be guilty of inconsistency. The inconsistency which Dr. Tennant seems most to feel is this refusal of Wendland to differentiate a "direct" and an "indirect" working of God. "It is a false view," says Wendland, "which represents God as working at one time indirectly, at another directly. The working of God is invariably direct. The expression 'God's direct working' is due to a false introduction of the ideas of law and causality into the religious view of the world. When that is done, it looks as if God worked in part through laws and ordinances, in part with a personal directness."[4] Dr. Tennant says in regard to such a contention that "if this be not explicit pantheism . . . it is at least acosmism to the extent of denying a world of continuant things."[5] The general trend of his position is to lead to the conclusion that should the two traditional types of causation be given up theism cannot stand.

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[1] Cambridge, 1925.

[2] See *Modern Churchman* (September, 1924).

This may be regarded as the crucial modern issue. Is theism consonant with the refusal to distinguish two types of causation in the universe — that is the question. We have found ourselves, with Ward, Wendland, and much modern British philosophical theology, unable to draw this distinction. And yet with them we do not regard this inability as leading to pantheism or acosmism. It was because we saw no valid grounds for drawing this distinction that our endeavour has been to maintain that the truth involved in the concept of the miraculous was a truth of religion. In this we are at one with the position taken by Schleiermacher already alluded to.

In this attitude we have been conscious also of a different orientation to the question from that of Wendland. With Dr. Tennant we have felt a certain inconsistency in his position —

[3] *Harvard Theological Review* (October, 1924), pp. 385–86.

[4] *Miracles and Christianity*, p. 17.

[5] *Miracle, etc.*, p. 50.

only the parts of his treatise in regard to which Dr. Tennant enters his *caveat* are not those against which we would enter ours. Wendland's religious view of the world will not allow him to differentiate between a "direct" and an "indirect" working of God. But he is also so tenacious of the metaphysical concept of miracle that he holds it need not be given up by this admission. He regards "the religious and the metaphysical concept of miracle as alike justified."[6] And his main contribution to the miracle discussion is his insistence that while the religious concept of miracle is primary, the metaphysical is essential as well. It is the distinction he draws between these two concepts which we find ourselves unable to draw. It is his emphasis on the objective *miraculum* which seems to us to breed the confusions which stultify all discussions on miracle.

Now, doubtless, the whole question revolves round what is meant by the *metaphysical* concept of miracle. We have been concerned to show the inadequacy of that concept in the sense in which it has been accepted and defended by most past miracle apologetic. Our reading of the history of apologetic compels us to acknowledge that the metaphysical concept of miracle therein defended brought it into inevitable antagonism with the faith of science in a rational universe. Our primary interest throughout has been apologetic as such. We have been deeply and critically concerned with a past apologetic for miracle. To us it has seemed that to divorce a study of miracle from the history of apologetic is to discuss *in vacuo* and to perpetuate ambiguities and confusions. Wendland himself, of course, repudiates the evidential concept of miracle as promulgated by past apologetic. He declares that "Christian faith . . . must discard the older argument from miracle,"[7] though he seems anxious to emphasize that this "argument from miracle" is especially characteristic of "Catholic theology." It must, however, be acknowledged that the argument was as characteristic of Protestant theology as of Catholic. Wendland likewise criticizes the endeavour of "Catholic theology" to prove by thoroughgoing objective investigation the reality of "miracles" — that is, that the "natural" causes of such

[6] *Op. cit.*, p. 280.

[7] *Op. cit.*, p. 50.

events were either inadequate or absent (this is the method employed in the laborious process of canonization, at Lourdes, etc.). This method of proof, he recognizes, must always be dubious. "For the multiplicity of co-operant causes never can be completely surveyed, or the interposition of Divine action proved empirically."[8] With all this we are in agreement — with, however, this proviso, that in this attitude of "objective investigation" Catholicism is only carrying to a logical issue the argument for miracle implicit in much Protestant apologetic. For Protestantism, with Catholicism, defended miracle as event where "natural" causes were either inadequate or absent. If then the statement be made that these "causes" were inadequate, grounds must be given for maintaining their inadequacy; and if absent, reasons adduced for establishing their absence. The logic of the whole position was, we believe, perceived by Catholicism and not by Protestantism, for the former sets about seeking to demonstrate their inadequacy or absence, while the latter, having no modern "miracles" to defend, merely *declares* that this inadequacy or that absence *must* have been. The point for emphasis is that when either Catholicism or Protestantism makes the inadequacy or absence of "natural" antecedents necessary to miracle, the battle must be fought on the ground of *empiricism*, and empiricism by its very nature cannot prove either this inadequacy or this absence.

In view of these agreements (with the aforementioned proviso), then, between Wendland's position and our own, wherein lies the difference between his standpoint and ours? In nothing else, we feel, than in the use of the term "metaphysical" as applied to miracle. With him I am altogether prepared to acknowledge that "the insoluble enigmas presented by the genesis of what is novel, original, and creative in the epochs of cosmic history suggest that we must assume, not a creation that happened once, but a creation which is always proceeding; in other words, a perpetual production by God of what is really new."[9] With him I hold that a transcendant factor is ever manifesting itself in the phenomenal world.[10] With him I maintain that "the conception (of the miraculous) is one which the religious interpretation of things

[8] *Op. cit.*, p. 4. [9] *Op. cit.*, p. 280. [10] *Op. cit.*, p. 19.

must decline to surrender."[11] With Herrmann, whom Wendland quotes with approval, I believe that what miracle stands for is that "nature is not the whole of the reality apprehensible by man."[12] But I cannot agree to defend the metaphysical miracle unless it is made clear beyond the possibility of ambiguity that this metaphysical miracle is not that defended and promulgated by so much past apologetic both Catholic and Protestant. I cannot defend a concept of miracle which involves a class of phenomena required by so much past miracle apologetic as "evidencing" a special type of supernatural intrusion — for there is no way of establishing that there are the two distinct types of phenomena which this apologetic claimed to discern. If in this refusal to defend a class of events called "miracles," regarded as "evidence" of supernaturally intrusive causation different by its very nature from the causation of ordinary events, we seem to some to lean unduly away from conservatism, it is not because we are unmindful of the kernel of truth in the miracle concept, but because we find ourselves so conscious of the necessity in these days of a valid Christian apologetic that we cannot base it on anything less than the most certain grounds.

Now it has seemed to us that Wendland's defence of the metaphysical miracle, in spite of the exceeding care with which he states it, is open to certain objections. He holds that "miracle" must have a "cognitive" as well as a religious significance.[13] He defines the conception of miracle which he holds to be valid in knowledge thus: "Miracles are acts of God, bringing a new condition of things to pass which was not implicit in the existing state of the world."[14] My criticism of this position is to ask what is meant by "which was not implicit in the existing state of the world." As far as I can see we are here again driven to a declaration that there are two classes of events — namely, those brought to pass which are regarded as being implicit in the existing state of the world, and those brought to pass which are regarded as not being implicit in the existing state of the world. To that position there are the following objections:

First. By what norm can the events be catalogued under the respective headings? It is impossible so to do, as Wendland himself acknowledges, by empirical observation. It must therefore be by religious insight. But in that case religious experience is held to discern certain events which Wendland declares have "cognitive" and "objective" significance. But the "cognitive" significance which Wendland assigns to miracle religious experience is not competent to discern. Religious experience can speak of "God's activity" in the universe and in life, but has no right to declare that this involves two classes of events, which are and which are not "implicit in the existing state of the world." In other words, religious experience can assert that God reveals, but cannot state anything as to the precise *mode* by which the revelation has been mediated to us. For whenever the question of mode is touched, assertions will be necessary which must antagonize science.

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[11] *Op. cit.*, p. 281.

[12] P. 109 (from *Offenbarung und Wunder*, p. 33).

[13] *Op. cit.*, p. 14.

[14] *Op. cit.*, p. 15.

In different places in his treatise, Wendland can be seen implicitly suggesting a duality of phenomena. He says, for example: "The usual defence of miracle takes certain conspicuous miracles — *e.g.* the cures wrought by Jesus — and attempts to show that they are inexplicable; and in spite of all analogies it must be confessed there is residuum of mystery. But it is *equally necessary* (italics ours) to bring out the mystery which resides even in the simplest processes of being, in the very texture of events." [15] The duality of phenomena is found hidden in the phrase "equally necessary." I agree that it is *necessary* to show that there is mystery in the most ordinary events. But I do not agree that that endeavour is "*equally* necessary" with the endeavour to show that a certain class of events is inexplicable. Wendland seems to hold that *both* attitudes are necessary, when really the position is that no one except the materialist will deny that there is mystery in the ordinary, but very many who adopt a religious interpretation of the universe will deny that scientific inexplicability must be predicated of any specific event or class of events.

Again, Wendland declares that one feature of miracle is "the amazing, the unexpected, often rising to the inexplicable." [16] I am uncertain here whether Wendland is speaking of various concepts of miracle to which he has just been alluding or of the concept of miracle he himself wishes to defend. While, on the one hand, he goes on to declare, "In this general sense it is possible to speak of miracle outside the sphere of religious faith," on the other he appends a note in which he says that "the 'inscrutable' is an inalienable element of the miraculous. . . . Religious experience . . . must always accentuate both things — the action of God, and the element of the mysterious and inscrutable." [17] Now it is this emphasis on the "mysteriousness" and "inscrutableness" of miracle which suggests that Wendland has clearly in his mind two distinct types of event. He refuses to differentiate them by referring to one as caused by the "direct," the other by the "indirect" activity of God. But he regards this element of "mysteriousness" as essential to the miracle event; hence this element must be a means by which the two classes of events are differentiated. Now, in answer to that position, it has to be emphasized that all events have an aspect which is beyond empirical analysis. Wendland himself recognizes this by referring to one or two illustrations.[18] Why then should it be necessary to say of miracle that it must have this mysterious element in it, unless it belongs to a class of events specifically recognizable as such? The answer might conceivably be given by Wendland that the "inscrutable" or "mysterious" element in these events called miracles is of a special quality or quantity — this to differentiate them from the inscrutable or mysterious element in ordinary phenomena. But in any case if the element of inscrutability or mysteriousness is emphasized as belonging to miracle, miracle becomes, in this feature of it at least, entirely a *relative* term. For what is uniquely mysterious or inscrutable to one person is not so to another. Very largely that aspect of event depends on the mental training of the individual. The eclipse, for example, is mysterious and inscrutable to the savage, but not *in the same way* to the scientifically trained. Thunder is mysterious to my child, but not so *in the same way* to myself. Much was mysterious to man Friday which was not so to Robinson Crusoe. Nor is this element of "mysteriousness" which Wendland claims for his miracle a stable and non-relative element *to the religious consciousness.* For religious minds vary in the sense of "mysteriousness" awakened by events. Frequently the most highly developed religious consciousness has least sense of mysteriousness and inscrutability in life, this while at the same time having the keenest and most awesome sense of the working of God.

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[15] *Op. cit.*, p. 265.

[16] *Op. cit.*, p. 9.

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[17] *Op. cit.*, p. 284.

[18] *Eg.*, the tile falling on a person from the roof of a house *op. cit.*, p. 284, the accident on a ship *op. cit.*, p. 16.

Thus, the first criticism of Wendland's definition of the metaphysical miracle that he defends is that it involves a definite class of events, and he gives us no clue by which they may be securely and non-relatively discerned.

Second. The second criticism of his definition is that the phrase "not implicit in the existing state of the world" is suggestive of a naturalistic or materialistic philosophy of phenomena. Can it be said that *any* event is "implicit in the existing state of the world"? A materialistic and deterministic philosophy may say that, but not, I think, a teleological. No event, surely, can be said to be *implicit* in past events. An event has its antecedents, but these antecedents are not the *cause* of the event. The *cause* of the event is our interpretation and not our description thereof. Wendland of course is fundamentally opposed to naturalism. I cannot therefore see why he regards some events as implicit and some as not implicit in the existing state of the world unless he means to differentiate two types of divine causation. *From his own standpoint* I do not see how he can refute Dr. Tennant's position that a "direct" and an "indirect" divine causation is necessary to miracle, for that distinction seems implicit in the concept of metaphysical miracle he himself defends.

We leave now the specific position of Wendland and return to the main issue. The determination of the issue between those who hold to a duality of proximate and direct causality for phenomena and those who do not leads far and goes deep. Nothing less, we believe, is involved than divergent orientations to the philosophy of theism, and divergent evaluations of *religious experience* as such. The fundamental issue raised is no less than what is meant by theism. In other words, Why do I believe in God, and what do I believe about Him? Behind the diverging discussions on miracle there are the diverging methods of approach to this question, and it is these divergences of philosophic approach which in the end beget the diverging conclusions. Our position has been that the notion of theism must not be used as a kind of *à priori* weapon to settle the miracle issue. Rather, the notion of theism must itself be determined by the idea of miracle which after discussion is found to be capable of defence. This has been our general method of approach to the issue.

In discussing the notions of law and causality, reasons were adduced for refusing to regard them as leading to materialism or naturalism. But the fact that these concepts do not involve naturalism (indeed invalidate it) does not warrant the immediate conclusion that they involve theism. A theistic philosophy of the universe is reached when into these notions of law and causality are *filled* the contents of the truths "given" to the moral and religious consciousness. The materialistic naturalist and the rationalist theologian alike regard this method of approach as involving an overweening claim for religious experience. For ourselves at least, however, the moral and religious consciousness must have primacy in any discussion of what is meant by the sacred term "God." Discursive thought is of course necessary to the statement of theism; but it works upon and with what is "given" to it in the developed religious and moral consciousness. Wendland has very well said: "If what religion does is not to paint a world of beautiful illusion, but reveal an objective reality, then religious thought, as unveiling to us the meaning of existence, must be laid down as the basis of our world interpretation and made supreme over all other kinds of knowledge." [19]

To return to Dr. Tennant's position. The distinction which he draws between the two types of causation, involving necessarily two different, mutually exclusive types of phenomena, is not one which we have found any valid grounds for making. It is, as we see the matter, only a distinction which is reached by an *à priori* theistic concept based upon omnipotence. And in the absence of any valid ground for making that distinction we are compelled to challenge the concept of theism which it is held to necessitate.

The distinction which we are unable to make is, we hold, one that it is not possible in any real sense to make, and indeed is one which Dr. Tennant himself recognizes cannot be discerned.

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[19] *Op. cit.*, p. viii.

Dr. Tennant explicitly recognizes that past miracle apologetic regarded "miracle" "as evincing inexplicability in terms of natural law."[20] This notion, he holds, was maintained because of the scientific insistence upon uniformity and order in Nature. For since miracle was regarded "evidentially" it could only retain such evidential value in a scientific age by claiming "unaccountability" to science. We have sought to show from nineteenth-century miracle apologetic that this was held to be the only way of defending miracle — that is, by setting forth its incapability of being subsumed under laws. Most nineteenth-century apologetic was based on this idea — and it is this idea which we regard as indefensible.

Following a discussion of the deists, in whom Dr. Tennant recognizes the "assumption of a reign of law in the sense of an all-pervading, unconditional, immutable necessity binding all things fast in fate,"[21] he concludes: "We may assert, then, that the possibility of miracle as an exception to law is not precluded *à priori*. Of Law that could so preclude miracle, we know nothing." This I have myself frequently emphasized: wherein I differ *in emphasis* is that I feel it necessary at once to go on to declare: "We may assert that the possibility of miracle as an exception to law is not *included à priori* (as it was by much nineteenth-century miracle theistic apologetic, the notion of the omnipotence of God being held to *require* such miracle). Of Law, that could so *include* miracle, we know nothing."

Dr. Tennant then discusses critically that "pseudo-scientific" nineteenth-century movement which spoke of scientific laws as if there were inherent in them a deterministic necessity. With this I am in essential agreement.

There is, let it be agreed, no logical ground for talking of the "uniformity of Nature" as if it were an *à priori* principle. Dr. Tennant criticizes J. S. Mill as one who "argued that the uniformity principle could be proved cumulatively by particular inductions."[22] Again he says that "J. S. Mill . . . strove hard to swell out inductive science into necessary truth, and to identify unvarying sequence with invariable connection."[23] We believe, however, that there is here some perhaps almost unavoidable confusion in the use of terms. Mill accepted the position which Hume had established — namely, that there is no *necessity* in the empiricism of scientific observation. He held that past and present experience assure us of an order which is descriptively "uniform." To use the term *uniformity* here may be ambiguous, but it might, we believe, be argued that Mill by his use of it did not mean any more than an *empirical and observed uniformity*, the connotation of the word *uniformity* being qualified and determined by the adjective *empirical*. Doubtless his language was ambiguous, as indeed all language in this metaphysical region is; and at times, like Hume before him, he was seemingly forgetful of his own first principles. Just as Hume when he came to discuss "miracle" wavered in his allegiance to the relativity of empiricism, and ruled out certain events as impossible or incredible which science since his day has given to us good grounds for claiming as credible and indeed as historical. Nevertheless the *main* position latent in Hume stands in spite of his wavering: the phenomena of the universe are matter for empirical description and not for *à priori* prescription. This, as we understand Mill, was his position. When Mill spoke of "the law of universal causation," it seems to us that he was thinking of "the uniformity of nature" in that relative and empirical sense. He argued that the faith in the rationality of the universe which this "uniformity" inspired was substantiated by all the facts observed by science. "The progress of experience," he said, "has dissipated the doubt which must have rested on the universality of the law of causation while there were phenomena which seemed to be *sui generis*, not subject to the same laws with any other class of phenomena, and not as yet ascertained to have peculiar laws of their own. This great generalisation, however, might reasonably have been, as it in fact was, acted on as a probability of the highest order, before there were sufficient grounds for receiving it as a certainty. In matters of evidence, as in all other human things, we neither require, nor can attain, the absolute. We must hold even our strongest convictions with an opening left in our minds for the reception of facts which contradict them; and only when we have taken this precaution have we earned the right to act upon our convictions with complete confidence where no such contradiction appears. Whatever has been found true in innumerable instances, and never found to be false after due examination in any, we are safe in acting on as universal provisionally, until an undoubted exception appears; provided the nature of the case be such that a real exception could scarcely have escaped notice."[24]

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[20] *Miracle*, etc., p. 4.

[21] *Miracle*, etc., p. 13.

[22] *Miracle*, etc., p. 15.

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[23] *Harvard Theol. Review* (Oct., 1924), p. 376.

On a point of detail, we do not think that justice has been yet done by the position of Baden Powell. Dr. Tennant says of his position: "In the theological world this doctrine (*i.e.*, of a reign of law as a necessity residing in phenomena) was advocated by Baden Powell . . . and the controversy on miracle was conducted for years between opponents equally pledged to this pseudo-scientific belief. . . . Baden Powell magnified the inductive principle into the equivalent of an *à priori* axiom, and so granted to science a capacity to disparage alleged miracle which science had no right to claim."[25]

Now, while some of Baden Powell's language in both his chief theological works — *The Unity of Worlds* and *The Order of Nature* — laid itself open to this criticism, his *essential* contribution to the miracle controversy in the nineteenth century has proved itself completely valid. It is necessary to remember that which Baden Powell was combatting if we would give due justice to his position. What he was concerned in assailing was a type of apologetic almost universal in his day, an apologetic which grounded itself on "miracles," namely, events which evidence a special kind of "supernatural interposition." Only as we remember this can we do historical justice to him. His main positions, so violently assailed in the sixties of the last century, are now for the most part accepted, though, alas, justice has never been done by theology to his memory. Against the theology of gaps he pointed out, and subsequent investigation has made doubly forceful the affirmation, that every advance in knowledge tends to fill up the apparent breaches in continuity. "Each physical discovery is nothing else than an extension of the evidence of continuity, a fresh link in the connexion of phenomena into one consistent whole." This led him to the following carefully expressed conclusion: "In all apparent anomalies, the inductive philosopher will fall back on the primary maxim, that it is always *more probable that events of an unaccountable and marvellous character are parts of some great fixed order of causes unknown to us, than that any real interruption occurs*."[26] The order recognized in Nature he regarded as "the evidence of the supreme mind": "the universality of order in time and space" as "the manifestation of the universality and eternity of that supreme mind."[27]

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[24] *System of Logic*, Book III, Chap. 21, Vol. II, pp. 108–09 (9th ed., 1875).

[25] *Miracle*, p. 16.

Baden Powell further maintained, as we believe unanswerably: "no testimony can reach to the supernatural; testimony can apply only to apparent sensible facts; testimony can only prove an extraordinary and perhaps inexplicable occurrence or phenomenon: that it is due to supernatural causes is entirely dependent on the previous belief and assumptions of the parties."[28] This position he continually emphasized in *The Order of Nature.* Testimony as such has nothing whatever to do with miracle traditionally conceived — that is, as an event caused by supernatural intrusion and not subject to scientific formulation. If we are satisfied that any event however remarkable has happened, we have no justification for calling it a miracle in this traditionalist sense. An apologetic which regards scientific inexplicability as essential to miracle is by that very fact precluded from claiming any event as such. This may seem a somewhat perplexing situation: the validity of the position is, however, unquestionable. "The essential question of miracles stands quite apart from any consideration of *testimony;* the question would remain the same, if we had the evidence of our own senses to an alleged miracle, that is, to an extraordinary or inexplicable fact. It is not the *mere fact*, but the *cause* or *explanation* of it, which is the point at issue."[29] Baden Powell's main position, therefore, as we regard it, was not that a necessity inherent in law rendered "miracle" (in the traditionalist sense) impossible; but that it is impossible to assert of any event that it is such.

Dr. Tennant further says: "What some theologians thus conceded was repudiated in the name of science by the agnostic Huxley." I have shown grounds for my inability to admit that such a concession was essential to Baden Powell's position. And certainly Huxley, who did so much to reveal the ambiguities and inconsistencies of Hume, was *not* opposed to those Christian theologians who like Baden Powell refused to base the truth of Christianity on what it was impossible to discern. Huxley, on the other hand, unanswerably maintained the same position as Baden Powell — as when he declared that if a dead man did rise to life it would be no proof of miracle traditionally conceived.

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[26] *Unity of Worlds* (2nd ed., 1856), pp. 112–13.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 116.

[28] *Essays and Reviews* (9th ed., 1861), p. 107.

[29] *Essays and Reviews*, p. 141.

On another point of historical detail, there has been a recent tendency to accord to Mozley's well-knit treatise a present validity which in our judgment cannot be assigned to it. That work is indeed the outstanding defence of the traditionalist concept of miracle which the nineteenth century gave to us, and has a value for that reason. Its essential position, however, is no longer defensible, and for that reason its value for present discussion is not great. Mozley in our judgment did not refute the position of Baden Powell. What he refuted was the old dogmatism that "miracles cannot happen," the position of some scientists who confused events that have been called miracles with the notion of miracle and who therefore said that all the events which theology had called "miracles" were "impossible." Therein lay the abiding value of Mozley's refutation, but *only* there. On the other hand, we believe Mozley fell into the very pit from which Baden Powell had endeavoured to rescue contemporary apologetic. He defended miracle as that which was "necessary for a revelation." It contained "proof." Now Baden Powell had shown unanswerably that no event can be regarded as a proof of the supernatural agency for which Mozley sought a proof. How, therefore, can that be "necessary for a revelation" when there is no way of declaring it to be such? Mozley's essential and fundamental position can no longer be regarded as valid.

Dr. Tennant himself accepts the essential position of Baden Powell. For he himself agrees that no event can be "evidential." He says: "The difficulty about miracle, in any sense in which the miraculous could be of evidential value to establish revelation, is . . . that, short of having a perfect knowledge of Nature's constitution, it is impossible to recognise any given event as miraculous when we see it."[30] Elsewhere he says: "The evidential value once ascribed to miracle, and which gave the miracle its theological significance, has disappeared."[31] Now this is the main position Baden Powell was intent upon assailing.

Further, a re-reading of the whole controversy between Mozley and the science of his day shows that each side failed to understand the other. What Mozley was concerned to assail in his second lecture on *The Order of Nature* was the mistaken way of regarding the order of nature as a necessity which could be used to discredit every recorded event which seemed at variance with that order. He maintained, therefore, that "the proper function of the inductive principle, the argument from experience, or the belief in the order of nature" was not "to lay down speculative positions, and to say what can or cannot take place in the world."[32] This position so stated is valid. Mozley, however, confused, as we believe, the whole issue by making the question of the historicity of alleged events coincident with the notion that such alleged events if historical must be "supernaturally caused," that is, incapable of orderly formulation by science. He held that in proportion as metaphysics revealed that there is no abstract necessity in the principle of the uniformity of Nature, "the principle of miracles" is befriended. This, however, is not so. What is "befriended" is the attempt to retain the *historicity* of certain events, not the attempt to maintain a special causative factor for them. Mozley, then, was right in maintaining that the inductive principle of science does not enable her to rule out as *impossible* any event. He was, as we believe, wrong in maintaining against science that any event, even if historical, can be regarded as proof of a causation of a different character from "secondary causation."

Tyndall, also, was entirely justified, in our view, when dealing with Mozley's position, in pointing out the *results* of scientific investigation.[33] That impulse which Mozley had declared to rest

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[30] *Harvard Theological Review* (October, 1924), p. 386.

[31] *Miracle*, p. 62.

[32] *On Miracles* (3rd ed., 1872), p. 45.

[33] See his paper, *Miracles and Special Providences.*

"upon no rational grounds, and can be traced to no rational principle" — the impulse, namely, to believe in and to discover an order in Nature capable of descriptive formulation — has certainly had very substantial and remarkable vindications, vindications which continually accumulate with the advance of scientific research. Neptune, previously unknown, was certainly there when the telescopes, in accord with this faith, based we are told upon "no rational principle," were pointed by Adams and Leverrier in a specific direction. How often has not human thought forestalled the fact hitherto unknown! The history of science is in large measure the history of these "forestallings." When Pascal's friend ascended the Puy de Dôme with his barometric column, the *fact* was as Pascal had predicted — during the ascent the mercury fell. The scientific specialist could afford a thousand illustrations of the vindication of this scientific faith.

It is these same *results* of scientific faith which in our judgment require emphasis. We agree with Dr. Tennant in his maintenance of the fact that logic shows that induction does not prove an "invariable," and for that reason we felt it necessary to maintain in Chapter III that there might well be an historical kernel for narrated events which have been called "miracles," which, at different times, science has dogmatically termed impossible. But the real question is whether any facts known to us are at variance with the scientific faith in explicability or rationality. And if we are not competent to instance such facts, is there any justification for claiming that there *must* be such?

It is well also to remember, if clarity in the discussion is to be retained, that Mozley, when arguing for miracles, was arguing for the historicity of the events in the gospels so called. I interpret the following words of Dr. Tennant as indicating his reference to that fact: "He (*i.e.*, Mozley) nailed his colours, it is true, to a mast which has since disappeared beneath the waves of critical research." [34] If the discussion on miracle is to have any reality and relevancy to the present situation, this fact must be clearly emphasized. Mozley regarded the question of the historicity of the New Testament alleged events called "miracles," and the question of *miracle* as the same question. To the modern apologist, acquainted with the methods and results of critical research, such a method of approach is impossible. This has compelled the recognition of the distinction between the question of "miracles" and the question of *miracle*, a modern distinction which Mozley would have repudiated *de coeur*.

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[34] *Miracle*, p. 17.

A feature of Dr. Tennant's discussion very pertinent to the situation today is, in our judgment, his criticism of the modern "descriptionist" attitude of science. Dr. Tennant, as far as I understand him, seems to hold that theism is mistaken in accepting this as a *boon* from science. He holds that "laws" *must* be more than descriptive, otherwise it is impossible for science to account for its success in showing a "hitherto unvarying" — "otherwise laws would have no validity nor science any predictiveness."[35] He says elsewhere: "The descriptionist theory, whatever element of truth it may contain, seems to me inadequate. I do not see how, without being faithless to it on occasion, its maintainers can account for the success of scientific method, especially in respect of science's conditional, yet actual, predictiveness."[36] He sums up his *critique* of "descriptionism" by saying: "The word 'cause' is expelled from the descriptionist's vocabulary; the concept of cause is all the time indispensable for his thinking, disguise it how he may."[37]

With the substance of this position we are in agreement; but it does not lead us, as it seemingly leads Dr. Tennant, to find therein a substantiation of miracle in the absolute sense. Science in so far as it is severely inductive can only speak of her laws as descriptive. She does this to rule out the notion of *necessity*, which Dr. Tennant and ourselves complained about in certain scientific dogmatisms. Now that this notion has been repudiated by science, the way is, in our judgment, open for *rapprochement* between theology and science. We cannot at one and the same time complain of the one-time dogmatic attitude of science, and complain that she has herself shown the irrelevancy and inacceptability *for her own purposes* of that notion.

It is indeed true that the descriptionist cannot exclude the notion of "cause" from his thinking. But neither can *any* rational being. I do not find that the modern scientist wishes to "disguise" this fact. He should have no wish and no reason so to do. But *as scientist* he has nothing to do with the notion of cause. He leaves it on one side. All he has, *as scientist,* to do is to observe, to collate facts. From these collations he deduces (*a-logically* Dr. Tennant would say) "laws." These "laws" he discards or amends if they do not fit newly observed facts.

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[35] *Miracle*, p. 25.

[36] *Harvard Theological Review*, October, 1924, p. 380.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 381.

But if the scientist at the same time is a philosopher, he is not only at liberty but indeed compelled to investigate the notion of cause in its bearing upon the fact of a "hitherto unvarying" to which he has found and finds no exception. To the traditionalist apologist for miracle he is entitled to ask two questions. *First:* "What are the exceptions you are anxious to keep room for? I have found none in my investigations; and the history of Science quite conclusively has been to eliminate what Theology at one time regarded as exceptions." *Second,* and most essentially important: "On what grounds do you question the legitimacy of my Faith in a rational and discoverable Order in the universe? Have you any *facts?* If not, on what other grounds?"

This latter question leads again to the crux of the discussion. Dr. Tennant maintains that to refuse to recognize the validity of this faith is necessary in the interests of theism. He holds that the abolition of the traditionalist distinction between natural and supernatural events leads us to either pantheism or materialism. The scientist works, he holds, in the faith that he "*can* widen the natural law to include the alleged supernatural within the natural." And he adds: "This pious hope involves abolition of any possible distinction between the natural and the supernatural, and reduces the *miraculum* to the *mirabile.* Such a view may be entertained by the pantheist, the absolutist or the materialist; and in so far as a man of science cherishes it, it is *qua* metaphysician of one of these types and not *qua* scientist. And, we may add, certainly not *qua* theist."[38]

We have sought in the main body of the thesis to answer this position. It involves nothing less than a complete examination of the theistic position. *Can* theism only co-exist with the maintenance of a class of phenomena by its very Nature scientifically indescribable? Our answer has been in the negative. On the contrary we have maintained that the only type of theism rendered inacceptable by this faith of science in the rationality of the universe is a theism based on a concept of miracle which there is no means of defending. The theism defended here is a "fundamentally ethical" theism, which finds in rationality and order the consistency of God who remains ever "faithful."

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[38] *Miracle,* p. 41.

Later on, Dr. Tennant returns to the same point and emphasizes again what he holds to be the necessity for theism of the distinction between natural and supernatural in the sense of two classes of phenomena due to different types of "causation." He defines these terms thus: "Natural causation means the immanent and transeunt action of created things; supernatural causation means fresh, direct, unmediated or non-devolved, intrusive or interpolated, activity on the part of the Creator."[39] He then goes on to say: "The antithesis between the natural and the supernatural which I have indicated, seems essential to theism, and is involved in any concept of miracle such as was wont to be deemed theologically significant."[40]

Many will find it difficult to reconcile this attitude which claims that the *miraculum* is essential to theism with the "modernist" position taken up by Dr. Tennant that no event can be recognized as theistically evidential. As far as that general movement in theology usually known as "modernism" is concerned, he assents to its main thesis on the question of miracle. He says: "The discovery of natural means of producing effects which once passed for miracles does not logically imply that by-gone marvels were not wrought by supernatural means; *but it removes all ground for logical certainty that they were so produced.*"[41] (Italics ours.) Later on he says: "There remains the question whether a miracle, as described in respect of its causation as well as in its respect of its relation to law or uniformity, admits of being with certainty recognisable as *miraculum* and not merely *mirabile.* I am afraid *this question must be answered in the negative.*"[42] (Italic ours.) Still later he says that "it is solely in respect of mode of causation that we can distinguish between the natural event and the supernatural"; he then goes on to declare that, "miracle, while possible, becomes unknowable or unrecognisable if it actually occurs. The evidential value once ascribed to miracle, and which gave the miracle its theological significance, has disappeared."[43] Here there is the most explicit repudiation of the central thesis of traditional miracle apologetic, a repudiation with which we cordially agree. Our difficulty, however, is in reconciling this repudiation with the maintenance of two distinct classes of phenomena known as natural and supernatural. We ourselves are not so metaphysically dogmatic as to deny the *possibility* of the *miraculum.* What we are concerned to challenge is the validity of nineteenth-century apologetic which maintained that the *miraculum* was discernible and that it was "evidence" of the truth of Christianity. As far as I am able to understand the position of Dr. Tennant it means that he regards as essential to theism a possibility to which there can yet be perceived or discerned no corresponding actuality. *If* "it is solely in respect of mode of causation that we can distinguish between the natural event and the supernatural";[44] and *if* it is impossible to distinguish these respective events when we see them; and *if* this distinction is essential to theism (all three positions maintained by Dr. Tennant), then as far as many will be able to understand that position theism has been placed in what may be regarded as a somewhat *precarious* situation. Strangely enough it is the precariousness of absolute unassailability. For no one can disprove a *possibility.* Theism, thus conceived, will be regarded by many as having taken a position of "splendid isolation" from all controversy and discussion with regard to the question of miracle. For, on the one hand, no specific events can be claimed as *miracula;* and yet, on the other, a class of events so designated is regarded as essential to theism. The defence of theism in that case seems to be bound up with the maintenance of this class of events, the *miracula,* and yet they must, *ex hypothesi,* be forever incapable of discernment or recognition. To the question which many will feel it necessary to raise: where or what are these *miracula,* there can, *ex hypothesi,* be no answer.

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[39] *Miracle*, p. 48.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 51.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

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[43] *Miracle,* pp. 61–62.

[44] *Ibid.,* p. 61.

A sceptical science may be expected to declare of such a theistic *Weltanschauung* that one of its foundations is merely *negative.* Such a science, and indeed a religiously based science as well, will find it necessary to emphasize that many events, at one time declared to be *miracula*, have been shown to be as explicable in the scientific sense as "natural" events. Our own position, on the other hand, has been dictated by a desire to free theism from the necessity of declaring that there *must be* such a class of events; for the area of the events so classified in past apologetic has with the progress of scientific research been progressively delimited.

However, here is the central issue, an issue which goes to the roots of most of the theological questions of the day. To theism there are two religious alternatives. On the one hand is deism; on the other, pantheism. Dr. Tennant prefers the deistic side of the strait to the pantheistic, and frankly acknowledges in different places his preference. To achieve the distinction between "natural" and "supernatural" events, there must be "*some* truth," he holds, "in the so-called Deistic doctrine of an 'Absentee God.'"[45] "Theism, I submit, must be sufficiently tinged with Deism to recognise a settled order, and an order in which the causation is not immediate divine creation."[46] I myself should prefer the deistic to the pantheistic side of the strait, *if* necessity were imposed upon me, and *if* the ethical side of the question would permit me. It is, however, just this *ethical* issue which Dr. Tennant nowhere in his discussion on miracle deals with. In addition to the inscrutable mystery represented by the question — *Where* are the interventions? — there is the additional intolerable burden imposed on such a faith represented by the question — What about the problem of *non-intervention?*

In order to escape the deistic Scylla, for which, if we *had* to make definite choice between the one and the other we should have preference, we do not think that we are compelled to be swallowed by the pantheistic Charybdis. There is a middle and safe course. If we set before us clearly the beacon light of our ethical concepts, we shall steer safely between the pantheistic Charybdis and the deistic Scylla. Wherever we discover the ultimate values — goodness, truth, and beauty — we find God revealed. In our anxiety to avoid pantheism we shall only, in our judgment, escape deism if we steer by our moral values. If we steer by the notion of omnipotence, we shall, in our belief, be found beached on the barren and forbidding "rational supernaturalism" of Deism.

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[45] *Miracle*, p. 49.

[46] *Ibid.*, pp. 50–51.

Dr. Tennant seeks to escape the deistic Scylla by a somewhat subtle emphasis on the difference between a "*relatively* settled order" and, I presume, an *absolutely* settled order.[47] The qualification "relatively" is Butler's, and is felt by Dr. Tennant to be essential in order to escape "the deism which assumed or implied that God's eternal plan was achieved, and His creative activity exhausted, in creating the world and impressing upon it a system of static or immutable law, so that He became an absentee or mere spectator, and the world a God-forsaken machine." [48] With this repudiation of deism we are of course in warmest agreement. At the same time the notion of a "*relatively* settled order" has to be scrutinized. What gives to us the right to distinguish the order of nature which we now observe as "relative" in contradistinction, I presume, to an "absolutely settled order"? The only justification that we can see for this distinction is that it is necessitated by the metaphysical concept of miracle it is held to perpetuate. In other words, it is entirely *à priori*. Have we any right to say of the order we observe that it is merely "relative"? To say that would be parenthetically to maintain that we know of interruptions in that order — which, as Dr. Tennant himself maintains, we do not. There seems to be no validity for this distinction save in the concept of miracle it is set forth to perpetuate. Furthermore, when Butler used this distinction he believed and maintained that "miracles" were discernible. That belief and that maintenance is now generally recognized as inadmissible: and this repudiation we regard as the determining issue of the whole modern discussion on miracle.

[47] *Miracle*, cf. pp. 46 and 51.

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 51.

PART TWO

THE APPLICATION OF THE FOREGOING PRINCIPLES TO THE GOSPEL "MIRACLES" AND TO THE PERSON OF CHRIST

CHAPTER VI

THE GOSPEL "MIRACLES"

There remains the important task of applying in some measure the principles adduced in the foregoing chapters to Christianity, especially to the "miracle" narratives of the Gospels and to the person of Our Lord Jesus Christ. If this application be not made, the discussion must be signally incomplete; it will remain "in the air"; it will leave in the mind a sense of unreality.

For the significance and importance of the discussion arise almost entirely through the place which "miracle" has in Christian origins and in Christian thought. Were there no "miracles" in Christianity, the debate on this question could hardly have arisen, and certainly would not have been sustained. The "miracles" narrated in other religions and in ecclesiastical history, while they contribute interest, do not contribute vitality to the discussion. It is because numerous questions which seem to many to be vital to Christian thought, centre round this discussion that it has retained, and still retains, its significance. It was regarded by the late Dr. Sanday, whose thought in his last years was so much occupied by this question, as "the haunting problem of miracles."[1] "This is the one crucial question," he said, "which brings to a head and includes all the rest."[2] Another similarly has held that "the problem of miracles . . . presents some of the most difficult and important questions with which theology has to deal."[3] With these judgments all who have given any thought to the question must agree.

Side by side, however, with this common recognition of the importance of the question go very divergent conclusions as to the *value* of the Gospel "miracles" for Christianity. Sanday in his *Nunc Dimittis* regarded their elimination as the removal of the last great difficulty.[4] Most of the "anti-miracle" lives of Christ written during the last one hundred years have been dominated by a similar judgment, namely, that the elimination of the "nature miracles" from the Gospel would be a welcome and valuable achievement of criticism. Keim, for example, speaking of the two classes of Gospel miracles — healing-miracles and nature-miracles — asks, "Who will not be content if the one remains standing, though the other totters or even falls?"[5] This attitude is now fairly common. Dr. Percy Gardner frankly acknowledges, "Critical study of history has produced among Modernists an indisposition to accept, or at all events to put any stress on, the miraculous narratives of the Gospels."[6] The significance of such views arises from the fact that they have arisen *within* the Christian Church. They are maintained, not by those who deny, but by those who maintain, the faith.

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[1] *Life of Christ in Recent Research*, p. 203.

[2] *The Position of Liberal Theology*, p. 32.

[3] Headlam in *The Miracles of the New Testament*, p. viii.

On the other hand, there are some who regard with suspicion, if not antagonism, this readiness to give up all Gospel "miracles." While these have sufficiently departed from traditional miracle apologetic as to refuse to place "miracles" in the forefront as a primary "evidence" for Christianity, they yet are suspicious of the rejective conclusions of historical and scientific criticism. Such suspicions have been aroused perhaps more by the unguarded, and perhaps ambiguous, utterances of some critics than by the main and essential truth which these maintain. It is, perhaps it should here be said, difficult for historical science and Christian philosophy always to understand each other. In reality they are partners in truth-seeking. But sometimes, on the one hand, the philosophic theologian, whose bent of mind is essentially constructive and hence tenacious of the truth apprehended by the past, is unjustly suspicious of the historian, the nature of whose task makes it *seem* destructive only; and on the other hand the historian, whose object above all is to separate truth from fiction, finds irksome the seeming unconcern of the philosopher with the critical conclusions at which he has, after patient and painstaking labour, arrived.

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[4] *The Position of Liberal Theology*, p. 33.

[5] *History of Jesus of Nazara* (Eng. tr., 1876), Vol. 3, p. 172.

[6] In article in *Hibbert Journal*, October, 1917.

Another attitude may be referred to, though it is not now frequently maintained. It is that of those who hold, in agreement with the *early* views of the late Dr. Bruce, that to give up Gospel miracles "means Christianity ceasing to be a substantive religion," and that "the Galilean must be renounced with or without regret, and some other divinity put in His place."[7] Such views, expressed in this extreme manner, may be referred to in order to make plain the undoubted change of attitude which a generation has effected in regard to this subject. Few but avowed opponents of Christianity would today maintain that quite so much is involved in the giving up of Gospel "miracles."[8]

The first question which arises is, What have the principles and conclusions of historical criticism to say with regard to the "miracles" narrated in the Gospels? The legitimacy of the modern critical method in its application to the New Testament must here be taken for granted. The aim of that method is not, as by many has been *fearfully* supposed, the discrediting of the central verities of the Christian faith. The *aim* of historical criticism is not so pretentious as to seek either to unmake or remake the Christian religion, though some may have so mistakenly conceived it. Its aim is neither theological nor religious; it is primarily historical. It is the endeavour to ascertain the exact historical facts which accompanied the beginnings of Christianity; or, as Dr. James Moffatt has recently expressed it, "the reconstruction of the historical setting in which Christianity arose."[9] And in order to do this it seeks to apply the same canons of criticism to our New Testament narratives as it would to any other historical record. The legitimacy of this important branch of New Testament study will probably today be denied only by those to whom a mechanical view of inspiration makes it *à priori* unnecessary and invalid. For all others, the study, while seen to be open to the inevitable perils of excessive subjectivism and of unscientific dogmatism, will not be ruled out of court. These perils merely manifest the imperative need of scientific caution and of sound judgment.

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[7] *The Miraculous Element in the Gospels*, p. 375.

[8] Dr. Bruce, it is well known, in his later years, changed his views in regard to the question, a change which can be paralleled by that which Dr. Salmon and Dr. Sanday experienced.

It is curious to note how with regard to "miracles" sometimes extremes meet. Some exponents of an excessive conservatism seem to be in agreement with the late Mr. Frederic Harrison, who believed that to acknowledge the inhistoricity of Gospel "miracles" "means this, that Jesus, the Son of Mary and Joseph, a young carpenter of Galilee, was an enthusiast who propounded a sort of general reformation amongst the Jews, but either thought he was or allowed his followers to say he was, the Son of God, and after preaching for some years, and allowing the ignorant mob around him to think that he made miraculous cures and raised people from the dead, was executed as a leader of sedition by the Romans, duly buried, but his followers stole his body and declared that he had risen into heaven." There are few, however, today who would fail to see the fallacy in this train of reasoning. (See *The Positive Evolution of Religion*, Frederic Harrison, p. 194.)

The application, indeed, of historical criticism to early Christian records must be recognized as not merely legitimate but as necessary and, in the highest degree, desirable. For the very fact that Christianity as a religion claims to have its roots in history compels us to set about ascertaining as well as we may what exactly were those historical roots. The attitude of those who claim that Christianity is an historical religion, who yet ward off historical critics from the field of the historical facts, contains within itself a central contradiction. It is possible to understand an attitude which, regarding religion and history as having no essential connection, views the endeavours of historical criticism with complete unconcern. But it is not possible to see anything but inherent inconsistency in the attitude of those who, holding Christianity and certain historical facts as inseparable, deny science the right to investigate those facts with the most scrupulous concern.

As regards the general application of this method to the Gospels, it may be regarded as having led to one securely established position — the *general trustworthiness* of the portraiture of Christ there revealed. The extravagant views of, for example, the Tübingen School are now almost universally discredited. Those views, based as they were on the sweeping *à priori* hypothesis that the growth of our New Testament was determined and governed and inspired by the conflict of Pauline and Petrine parties in the post-apostolic age, placed the composition of the Gospels well on into the second century. This dating seemed to

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[9] *The Approach to the New Testament*, p. 199.

Baur a necessary conclusion of his "tendency hypothesis"; for he saw in the Gospels a *mediating tendency* on the part of their writers. The *order* in which our Gospels were composed was also to Baur a necessary conclusion to this hypothesis. The Petrine Matthew came first; the Pauline Luke followed; the neutral or conciliating Mark came still later.[10] These views as to the composition and dates of the Gospels, it is hardly necessary to say, are not now regarded as defensible. Matthew Arnold's reference in *Literature and Dogma* to the New Testament narratives "*with their incubation of a century*" is an interesting relic of Gospel dating no longer accepted even by "advanced" critics. The comparatively recently maintained views of those who, like Drews, J. M. Robertson, and W. B. Smith, hold that no historical reliance whatever can be placed on the narratives of the life of Christ in our Gospels, that, indeed, He Himself never existed, are interesting illustrations of the singularly warped judgment which occasionally accompanies specialized knowledge.[11] Such views, in spite of the insignificance of their influence, may be referred to here, if only because of their psychological instructiveness and interest. Harnack, whose judgment is of especial value, owing to his thoroughgoing acceptance and use of the historical method, says that he cannot discover that historical criticism has altered "the main lineaments of the personality of

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[10] Cf. Baur's *Church History of the First Three Centuries* (3rd ed., Eng. tr., 1878, 2 vols.). At p. 25 he says, "The Gospel of Mark is so largely indebted to the other two that we cannot regard it as an independent source at all." For a critical statement of Baur's views see Pfleiderer's *The Development of Theology, etc.*, pp. 224 ff.; H. S. Nash's *The History of the Higher Criticism of the New Testament* (New York, 1900, pp. 128 ff.). This latter book is a brief but valuable philosophical history of New Testament criticism.

[11] See *The Christ Myth*, by Arthur Drews (Eng. tr. from 3rd German ed., 1910). In the preface Drews refers to precursors of his — Bruno Baur, Bolland, etc. — who maintained similar views. See also *Christianity and Mythology*, J. M. Robertson, 1910. Also *A Short History of Christianity* and *Pagan Christs: Studies in Comparative Hierology*, by the same writer. Robertson traces the picture of Christ in the Gospels "to a mixture of mythological elements in heathenism and Judaism" and sums up his conclusions thus: "Christianity so called, in short, we find to be wholly manufactured from pre-existent material within historic times" (p. 276, *Christianity and Mythology*). See also *Ecce Deus: Studies in Primitive Christianity*, W. B. Smith, 1912. For a brief discussion of such views as recently resurrected in France, see Art. in *The Modern Churchman*, April-May, 1927, "The Problem of Jesus in France: Myth or History," by the present author.

Christ, and the sense and true point of His sayings."[12] What the same writer said in *The Chronology of Ancient Christian Literature up to Eusebius* (1897) about the New Testament in general holds good of the Gospels in particular: "there was a time . . . in which it was thought that the oldest Christian literature, including the New Testament, must be regarded as a web of deception and falsehood. This time is past. . . . The oldest Christian literature is in the main and in most of its details true and authentic as far as historico-literary research can determine."[13]

This "general trustworthiness," however, does not mean "infallibility in detail." The historical portraiture of Christ given to us in the Gospels may be in its main features, and in the impression that it makes upon us, inherently trustworthy, without necessitating our acceptance of every detail of that history. The fact indeed that there are differences between the Gospels themselves compels that recognition. The very existence of a "Synoptic Problem" and of the necessity of constructing what was at one time called a "Harmony" of the Gospels makes this manifest. The further fact that, in regard to the fourth Gospel, even those who accept its apostolic authorship do not feel free to use it in the same way as they would the Synoptic Gospels, points in the same direction.[14] It may therefore be recognized as on the whole a valid conclusion of historical criticism that not every fact recorded in the New Testament can be accounted equally historically reliable. The idiosyncrasies of their writers reveal themselves in our sacred scriptures as surely as they do in all other branches of literature. And that they were liable to error will hardly be denied save by those to whom the notion of inspiration is synonymous with that of infallibility.

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[12] *Christianity and History* (Eng. tr., 1900), p. 56.

[13] I am indebted for this quotation to Hurst, *History of Rationalism* (revised ed., 1901, New York), p. 329. Gore has the same quotation in *Belief in God*, p. 185. Cf. also the judgment of one of our cautious English scholars: "There can be no doubt on critical grounds that we possess the narratives of the life and teaching of our Lord substantially as they were told by the first generation" (Headlam, *The Miracles of the New Testament*, p. 173).

[14] In view of the fairly general agreement today that the fourth Gospel is not to be regarded as a strictly historical life of Jesus, we do not feel it necessary to consider in detail in the ensuing pages the "miracles" there recorded. One of the most recent judgments in regard to this Gospel may be cited. "It may now be regarded as practically certain that the *Fourth Gospel* was written after the end of the first century, and that it presents the life of Jesus, not in a strictly historical fashion, but under the light of a given theology. It is not so much a record as an interpretation" (*The Ethical Teaching of Jesus*, E. F. Scott (1924), p. 4).

These general considerations and standpoint will prepare the way for the specific bearing of historical criticism on the "miracle stories" narrated in the Gospels.

The narratives as we have them contain records of events which, to say the least, are very striking and unusual. Jesus is portrayed by all the Evangelists as one who did very "wonderful" things. The question here is, Are these stories historically reliable?

In seeking to answer that question, the first point that emerges is the *date*, *authorship*, and *composition* of the Gospels. The whole field of the literary and historical criticism of the Evangelical narratives here lies before the investigator. It is not of course possible to launch forth upon this fascinating field, nor indeed to enter upon a detailed account of the conclusions, and the reasons for such conclusions, generally arrived at in regard to these questions. It may, however, briefly be stated that there are, by general agreement, two main "sources" for the subject-matter of the Synoptic Gospels. (1) St. Mark's Gospel, or, if not in its present form, an earlier edition of it (known usually as Ur-Markus). This was in the hands of the first and third Evangelists when they wrote, and they inserted in their Gospels almost its entire substance. (2) A hypothetical and, as far as we know, non-existent source, known usually as "Q" (from German *Quelle* = source), from which the material common to Matthew and Luke, but not found in Mark, was derived. There is also another special source which should perhaps be referred to, known sometimes as L, from which Luke derived the material peculiar to him.

The question as to the precise dates of these sources is as yet problematical. It is, however, fairly generally agreed that Mark's Gospel dates about thirty years after the death of Christ. As to the date of Q there is still some disagreement. Harnack regards it as "more ancient than St. Mark," yet only slightly so, for he goes on to say that Mark and Q were "composed at nearly the same time."[15] Ramsay assigns a much earlier date to Q. "The lost Common Source of Luke and Matthew," he holds, "was written while Christ was still living. It gives us the view which one of His disciples entertained of Him and His teaching during His life time."[16] Salmon, holding that Mark made use of Q, necessarily believed that Q was earlier in date.[17] Wellhausen, on the other hand, regarded Mark as the earlier.[18]

The question now arises whether any of these sources, as far as we can ascertain them, is without record of the remarkable powers attributed to Jesus in the Gospels as we now have them. This question is important in view of the endeavours that have been made to work back to a "non-miracle" nucleus of the Gospels. The answer to the question is that each of the aforementioned sources contains accounts of remarkable happenings. We do not here enter into an examination of the evidence which leads to this conclusion. We have thought it well, in the interests of the clarity and sequence of the argument, to leave critical investigation of this question to a long appendix to this chapter, which may, according to the mentality of the reader, be either now or later referred to. It will suffice at this point to state the following conclusions. (1) St. Mark's Gospel portrayed from beginning to end a person who is transcendent not only in goodness but in "power." (2) The source known as Q, so far as it may critically be ascertained, contains also stories, which, while less wonder-provoking, are yet sufficiently remarkable to make it impossible to say baldly that Q "contains no evidence for miracles,"[19] unless such an assertion be subject to critical exposition of its meaning. (3) Matthew and Luke in the respective parts peculiar to each give "miracle" narratives. The literary study of the Gospels therefore does not afford justification for concluding that any of the sources into which they are resolved, or on which they are based, portrayed a Jesus without remarkable powers, though, as we hope to show later, that study affords justification for the conclusion that a "heightening" of these remarkable powers is discernible. The late Dr. Sanday said: "In the Gospels we have a convergence of evidence from every one of the larger documents or literary strata that criticism indicates," and this evidence, further, is "excellent in quality." [20]

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[15] See *The Sayings of Jesus*, Vol. II of *New Testament Studies* (Eng. tr., 1908), pp. 248–49. In this volume Harnack attempts to reconstruct the text of Q.

[16] *Luke the Physician* (1908), p. 89.

[17] Cf. *The Human Element in the Gospels*, p. 69, etc.

[18] Cf. Hawkins, *Horae Synopticae* (2nd ed.), p. 113.

[19] J. M. Thompson, *Miracles in the New Testament*, p. 58.

Confined therefore as we are to our Gospels for a historical portrait of the life of Our Lord, we may take it that the view of Him as one who did remarkable things belongs to the earliest records. To extirpate these narratives wholesale is therefore a proceeding arbitrary in the highest degree; it is not one that any school of scientific criticism would countenance. The historical critic will acknowledge that the doing of very remarkable things is a feature of His life and activity which cannot be cut off arbitrarily from the whole portrait without leaving a distortion from which it would be exceedingly difficult for us to conceive what His real features were. His words and His works, it has frequently been maintained, are so harmoniously one in this portrait, that the loss of the first would leave us a voice, but not a person, a lesson but no teacher from whom it could come. "We cannot separate," said the late Dr. Illingworth, "the wonderful life, or the wonderful teaching from the wonderful works. They involve and interpenetrate and presuppose each other, and form in their indissoluble combination one harmonious picture." [21] The *substantial* validity of this judgment abides, even though modern historical investigation of the Gospels could not admit that *all* the "wonderful works" stand or fall together, or that *all* of them are necessary to a "harmonious picture" of Christ. With this reservation we are able to quote with agreement the words of

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[20] *The Life of Christ in Recent Research*, p. 213. This utterance of Sanday belonged to his *transitional* period in regard to the question of miracles, between the attitude, on the one hand, of *Outlines of the Life of Christ* and, on the other, *Divine Over-ruling* and *Bishop Gore's Challenge to Criticism* and *The Position of Liberal Theology*. There is nothing to our view in the utterance which would require emendation from his later judgment. It is true that he made in his later years more "deduction on historical grounds from the miracle narratives of the Gospels" than he was willing to do earlier. But these "deductions on historical grounds" do not affect the truth of the earlier utterance we have quoted, viz., that the literary strata of the Gospels indicated by criticism all contain accounts of remarkable powers possessed by Christ. He might, however, have amended the "excellent in quality" remark.

[21] *Divine Immanence* (cheap ed.), Chap. 4, p. 50.

Illingworth, even though his general traditional attitude to the "supernatural" is not to us acceptable. A historical judgment such as that quoted stands irrespective either of one's philosophy of the miraculous or of one's judgment in specific instances of the Gospel "miracles." This is shown by the fact that Dr. A. B. Bruce, in his later days when his attitude to "miracles" had so radically changed, gave expression to practically the same historical judgment as Illingworth. "In most of the reports," he wrote of the healing works, "the action of Jesus is so interwoven with unmistakably authentic words (*e.g.*, in the case of the palsied man) that the two elements cannot be separated; we must take the story as it stands or reject it entirely."[22] If, therefore, we were to eliminate all remarkable happenings or acts of Christ from the Gospels as unhistorical, we should be making it practically impossible to arrive at an understanding as to who Jesus was, and what He was like. This is really an attitude leading to complete historical despair. "There can be no doubt," said Dr. Percy Gardner, "that any attempt to eliminate from that life as recorded in the Gospels all that is extraordinary and unusual in the relations of Our Lord to the visible world must result in its complete dissolution into myth and fancy."[23] Dr. Sanday expressed the same truth when he wrote: "The truth is that the historian who tries to construct a reasoned picture of the Life of Christ finds that he cannot dispense with miracles."[24] If we place the last word "miracles" in quotation marks, as indicating *remarkable works*, not necessarily associated with any philosophy of the miraculous, this utterance is as true to Sanday's final as it is to his earlier attitude. The conclusion of Keim, half a century ago, of whose work Pfleiderer said that it "is so distinguished by the richness of its learned material and the ability with which it is handled, as to constitute it the best representation of the present (in 1898) condition of our knowledge of the life of Jesus,"[25] has received added validity and force through the historical studies into the Gospels since then: "The picture of

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[22] Article, "Jesus," in *Ency. Bib.*, Vol. 2, p. 2445.

[23] *Exploratio Evangelica*, p. 221.

[24] *Outlines of the Life of Christ*, p. 113.

[25] Preface to 1898 Eng. ed. of Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, p. xxiii.

Jesus, the worker of miracles," wrote Keim, "belongs to the first believers in Christ, and is no invention." Remembering the sense in which Keim used the word "miracles" here, a secure foundation is given on which to build. It is quite impossible to regard all the narratives of remarkable deeds narrated of Christ in the Gospels as the fabrication of myth and legend. If we are faithful to the spirit of literary and historical investigation, the unstudied and ingenuous simplicity, besides the almost disconcerting vividness, of many of these narratives compel us to conclude a considerable historical basis for them.

The historical critic's task is, however, by no means completed with this conclusion. Granted that the power of doing "wonderful" works is an essential feature of the portrait of Jesus, how far may we accept the specific records of these events as exact accounts of what really took place? That exceptional power belonged to Jesus we must indeed believe; for on the hypothesis that there was nothing unusual in His life, it is impossible to conceive how the Gospels came to be written in their present form. In that case we should have presented to us an insoluble literary and historical problem, namely, how men unversed in literature could have presented to us the portrait of Jesus we have in the Gospels, a portrait which harmonizes so perfectly word and work, thought and action, that the result is a unity of remarkable perfection. Only on the supposition that Jesus did unusual or extraordinary things can we explain the portrait of Him given to us in the Gospels. The recognition, however, of this fact does not carry with it the scientific accuracy of the narratives of those unusual activities. And the historical critic at once must go on to ask, Are any of those considerations adduced in Chapter II which lead to a sceptical attitude towards many of the "miracles" of other religions, or of ecclesiastical history, of weight here? While these considerations may not explain away all the wonderful acts of Jesus, do they afford ground for supposing that there are *exaggerations* in these narratives? And if so, to what extent?

We come here to the crux of the historical problem in relation to the "miracles" of the Gospels. The question confronting the historical critic here is one of very considerable delicacy, requiring caution, courage, and candour. On the one hand, regard for the narratives in which are enshrined the substance of all that is truest and dearest to us will engender reverential caution. On the other hand, fidelity to the principles of historical science will compel their application here as elsewhere.

The kind of problem that confronts us may be perhaps best indicated by quotations from two scholars, who, while having given considerable thought to this problem, have not found their conclusions in agreement. The late Dr. Sanday wrote: "We may be sure that if the miracles of the first century had been wrought before trained spectators of the twentieth, the version of them would be quite different." [26] Dr. Headlam, at the close of his book on the subject, writes: "I have frankly confessed throughout, that while the evidence that we have for miracles as a whole is good, the character of the Gospel narrative is not such as to enable us to be certain that every event took place exactly as it is reported." [27] These statements both indicate the view that the narratives may not be accepted as scientifically accurate. But this common recognition of the same truth on the part of two historical writers on the Gospels, who do not agree in their conclusions as to what is fact and what is not fact in those narratives,[28] indicates that the whole point is, how far, or to what extent, would a scientific account of these incidents differ from the Gospel account.

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[26] *Outlines, etc.*, p. 104.

[27] *Op. cit.*, p. 339. Alongside these two judgments may be put that of Dr. F. H. Chase: "There are considerations to which we cannot honestly shut our eyes. The accounts of particular miracles come to us in records written by ordinary men; and these records are based on the reminiscences of ordinary men, whose observations were conditioned by the ideas of their age. The comparative study of the Gospels shows us, as we have already seen, that there were tendencies in operation among Christ's followers in the earliest days which might conceivably transfer this or that event across the boundary which for most minds separates the memorable from the miraculous. If then it is unreasonable to maintain that the whole of the so-called supernatural activity of our Lord was due to a mythopoetic tendency among His followers, yet criticism must be free to examine the accounts of the several miracles in the light of the ascertained characteristics both of the evangelical writers themselves and also of their race and age" (*Cambridge Theological Essays* (1905), pp. 405–06).

[28] Dr. Headlam seems noticeably more guarded in his more recent book, *The Life and Teaching of Jesus the Christ*, in his references to the Gospel "miracles." His conclusion there is one with which a more radical critic of the Gospels would not disagree: "We are still, I think, left in the position of either refusing to accept what appears to be quite good evidence, or accepting phenomena which are inconsistent with ordinary experience" (p. 194).

To that question it seems impossible at present to give a completely assured historical answer. There remains, in the present inconclusive state of investigation into this most difficult question, some considerable divergence of judgment as to the amount of that difference. Some make that amount large enough to rule out all so-called "nature-miracles" as unhistorical; others make it sufficiently small to allow historical room for at least some of such.

But without taking safe refuge in such a conclusion, which after all is indicative of a despairing attitude towards historical science, it seems necessary to give a more detailed consideration to this question, and especially to subject the *pros* and *cons* of the respective sides on this controversial issue to critical examination.

The question round which most of the contentious issues gather at this point may be put in this way: Is there a "miraculous atmosphere" in the Gospels? Are there any indications to suggest that any or all of the Evangelists "heightened the miraculous colouring"?

With a view to showing that the seemingly radical divergencies of view are not so deep-seated as might seem from isolated statements culled from the acceptors and rejectors respectively of Gospel "miracles," we would first of all point out the *acknowledgments* of conservative writers. We do this not according to the manner of scoring debating points in order to weigh down the scales in favour of the "miraculous exaggeration" thesis by adding to that side the oblique argument gained from the concessions of the other side, but in order to set forth with precision that the question no longer is, Is there a heightening of the miraculous? but, What is the extent of that heightening?

The following are a few illustrations of such acknowledgments:

Birth Stories of John and Jesus. Writers of various critical standpoints see admixture of fact and legend in these stories. One quotation may suffice from a more conservative writer. "It must be frankly confessed," says Dr. Headlam, "that there is much reasonable doubt as to the limits of what is history and what is legend in the story."[29]

Feeding of the Five Thousand. It is generally conceded that it was exceedingly probable that among this multitude there were others besides the boy who had provisions. Dr. A. B. Bruce, for example, in his earlier days when seeking to defend the "miracle" of the feeding of the five thousand admitted that it was "intrinsically probable that there was a much larger store of provisions in the crowd than was at first known to the disciples and their Master."[30]

Feeding of the Four Thousand. This is frequently acknowledged by those who defend the historicity of the Gospel "nature-miracles" as being but another account of the feeding of the five thousand — in other words that it did not happen. Gore, for example, who defends the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand says that, "It is not at all unlikely that 'the feeding of the four thousand' is really an account of the same incident as 'the feeding of the five thousand.'"[31] Headlam likewise acknowledges, "I cannot but believe that this (*i.e.*, feeding of the four thousand) is a doublet of the feeding of the five thousand."[32] This admission is of high importance in view of the fact that the feeding of the four thousand belongs to the Marcan narrative, and, besides which, is interwoven with a Marcan account of Christ's teaching (Mark, 8 : 20).

The Commission to the Twelve. A comparison of St. Mark's account with St. Matthew's here is significant. Christ's commission, according to Matthew, is, "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils" (Matthew, 10 : 8), while Mark merely tells us that in this mission the twelve "cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them" (Mark, 6 : 13). Gore says in regard to this significant difference: "This *heightening of the miraculous colouring* (Italics ours) is not discoverable generally or to any considerable extent."[33] But the point here to note is not the debatable question as to the "extent" of the "miraculous colouring"; it is the *fact* of its acknowledgment by Bishop Gore at this place.

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[29] *Life and Teaching of Jesus the Christ*, p. 91.

[30] *Op. cit.*, p. 217.

[31] *Belief in God*, p. 253. Cf. also p. 191.

[32] *The Life and Teaching of Jesus the Christ*, p. 13. Cf. also *The Miracles of the New Testament*, p. 194.

The Swineherd Incident. The incident has always occasioned difficulty. It is not easy to any, impossible to most, to believe, with a modern writer, that Christ "pressed the swine into the service of His humane endeavour. He was Lord of Man and of beast, and, even as He directed a shoal of fish into the net of His disciples, so He compelled the herd of swine to work His will. He smote the creatures with a sudden panic, and they rushed down the incline to their destruction."[34] That Christ *by definite volition* caused the death of this swineherd, even though as it used to be emphasized it was to achieve this man's cure, is to most an intolerable idea. One among many acknowledgments of difficulty with this incident may be cited: "I will frankly confess," says Headlam, "that I do not feel altogether able to satisfy myself about it."[35] If we may digress for a moment from the course of our argument, we should like to point out that the difficulty of many is occasioned by a confusion of *the fact* of the drowning of the swine, with the *idea* that Christ should have acted so as of set purpose to achieve this. These two, the fact and to us, an impossible idea, do not go together. It is therefore open to the historical critic to accept the historicity of the incident and to construe it in such a way as to make it compatible with a supremely high moral view of Christ.[36]

The Stater in the Fish's Mouth. Most read this incident (Matthew, 17 : 27) with a question mark in the mind. The basal reason for this questioning attitude is not the fact that it is only related by Matthew and by him unsatisfactorily (in that the words of Christ telling the disciples what to do are recorded and *not* the fulfilment of His command), but the feeling that it was not like Christ to do a thing of this nature. Now this is important, for it shows that *all*, conservative and liberal alike, apply their presuppositions to specific Gospel narratives. In this case the presupposition of what Christ is conceived as likely to have done or not done has determined the rejection of this one by many defenders of "nature miracles." Dr. Bruce in his earlier days indicated his difficulty with this incident when he wrote: "This very peculiar nature-miracle cannot be regarded as an absolute certainty, but at most as a probability." [37] Others go farther and refuse altogether to recognize it as a fact, regarding it as having its historical origin in one of Christ's sayings. "The words about the *Stater* in the fish's mouth," says Dr. Garvie, "should be regarded as a figurative saying about the gains of fishing, rather than as the promise of a miracle." [38]

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[33] *Belief in God*, p. 256.

[34] Dr. David Smith in *The Days of His Flesh*, p. 193.

[35] *The Miracles of the New Testament*, p. 308.

[36] For an exceedingly interesting psychological understanding of the incident see Berguer, *Aspects of the Life of Jesus*, p. 213.

The Withering of the Barren Fig Tree. Here again not only radical but also conservative critics have found difficulty. Some have sought to hold that the withering was entirely "natural," others that the fact-basis of the story was not an incident at all but a saying of Christ's. "While we need not question Christ's power," says the writer of the conservative article on "Miracles" in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, "it is open to us to seek explanations of such a story." [39] Considerable grace would be required in the more radical critic to hold back the spontaneous reply, "It is open surely to us to seek explanations of the origin of *other* 'Miracle' stories."

The Crucifixion Earthquake and the Resurrection of the Saints. The stupendous occurrences narrated at Matthew 27 : 51–53 are with practical unanimity rejected by writers of every shade of critical colour. The reasons for this rejection are, *first*, that events so astounding would require for our credence evidence much more than a bare assertion in one Gospel; and, *second*, the instinctive feeling that, in regard at least to the "Resurrection of the saints," not thus would God signalize the death of Jesus. The latter reason, it is obvious, has determined the view of those writers who accept the earthquake but reject the saints' rising.[40] The "evidence" in each case being the same, these writers cannot be

[37] *The Miraculous Element, etc.*, p. 235.

[38] *Studies in the Inner Life of Jesus*, p. 234.

[39] Vol. VIII, p. 682.

[40] *E.g.*, Dr. David Smith; cf. *The Days of His Flesh*, p. 504.

held to reject the saints' rising on evidential grounds; they reject on the presupposition of its extreme unlikelihood.

Matthew's and, to a lesser degree, Luke's omissions of statements in Mark attributing to Jesus human emotions and inability (see Note on this question of "Miraculous exaggeration" at the end of this chapter). These have been recognized in all ages by students of the Gospels. The point is of importance for our subject in view of the modern agreement of critical scholarship that Matthew and Luke had Mark before them when they wrote.[41]

These illustrations serve to show that the question before us no longer is, Is there "miracle exaggeration" in the Gospels? The only question now really at issue is, What is *the extent* of the enhancement in "miracle" detail?

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In order, if possible, further to narrow the issue, it may be noted that the "healing miracles" are generally accepted today as having a sound historical kernel. The real question left for examination therefore centres round the so-called "nature miracles" and a few non-healing "miracle" incidents. These are of two classes: first, those related as having been wrought by Christ; and second, events narrated in association with His life. Infinitely the most important of these is the Resurrection to which a separate chapter is assigned. The question then is: Do these represent in substance sound historical fact? *Or*, are they to be regarded as stories in which a basis in natural fact is overlaid or embellished either by a "miraculous" interpretation or by legendary accretion?

In order to give a consideration as impartial as the limitations of our mind will permit to this question, let us examine the arguments adduced *pro* and *con*.

A. Those who maintain the sound substantial historicity of these narratives may set forth the following considerations:

(1) The *evidence* for the miracle narratives in the Gospels, these have held, is of such value that the deductions of those who seek to rule out all the "miracle" details are unacceptable. These

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[41] It was, for example, because St. Augustine had noted that St. Mark set forth with more detail the human characteristics of Christ that he assigned to this Gospel the symbol *Man*. Cf. Sweet's, *St. Mark*, p. xxxvii.

narratives, it is pointed out, are separated only by a generation, if indeed by that, from the events themselves. In this respect the quality of the Gospel evidence for miracles is much better than that for all kindred stories. This consideration alone, it is held by some, is sufficient to invalidate the conclusion of legendary exaggeration. Bishop Headlam, for example, has held that "the difference in quality between the evidence for the miracles of the New Testament and that for other similar phenomena makes the deductions of comparative religion untenable." [42]

It seems questionable, however, whether this argument can carry quite the weight that is put upon it. Indeed, much of its force is negatived by the conservative admissions already noted. While it is to be recognized as a most important consideration for the maintenance of the general historical reliability of the Gospel narratives, it does not seem adequate for ruling out the possibility of exaggeration in "miraculous" details. No long period of time is necessary for a story to receive embellishments. This acknowledgment may be frankly made; nor need it prevent us from combating the wholesale elimination of the unusual from the Gospels.

(2) A more important consideration frequently adduced in favour of the stories as we have them is that these narratives are so integrally one with the rest of the Gospels that to discredit them is to cast doubt on the whole. It has already been pointed out how the works and words of Christ are knit together into a

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[42] *The Miracles of the New Testament*, p. ix. To show the historical persistence of this method of defending Gospel miracles it is of interest to remember the main thesis of Bishop Douglas in his once famous book published in 1754. That thesis is sufficiently expressed in the title of the book: "The Criterion, or Miracles Examined, with a view to expose the pretensions of Pagans and Papists; to compare the Miraculous Powers recorded in the New Testament, with those said to subsist in later times, and to show the great and material difference between them in point of Evidence: From whence it will appear that the former must be True, and the latter may be False." Of historical interest also is the fact that Conyers Middleton followed his once famous *Free Inquiry*, in which he maintained that the post-apostolic miracles were fictitious, with investigations in which he sought to bring the same critical principles to bear on the New Testament writers as he had done previously on the Fathers. Vol. II of his *Miscellaneous Works* (published in 4 vols. in 1752) contains an Essay on "Reflections on the Variations, or Inconsistencies, which are found among the Four Evangelists in the different accounts of the same facts," and "An Essay on the Gift of Tongues."

strikingly harmonious unity. If then, it may be asked, we eliminate the works, what confidence have we as to the words? And if the fact-basis of those "miracle" narratives, in that part of it for which the evidence is as good as for the rest of the Gospel story, is questioned, is not the fact-basis of the whole made insecure? This is the contention of Gore who says: "We must take it for granted that the elimination of the miraculous cuts so deep into our documents as to render the whole foundation of fact insecure."[43]

Again, however, it is not possible to doubt that this attitude is unduly despairing. The contention that the words and works of Christ are so closely knit together that to question one is to question both, is much too sweeping. "It is highly significant," Deissmann has pointed out, "that the great mass of the sayings of Jesus in the Synoptic tradition are not brought into any organic connexion with miracles."[44] The argument is certainly adequate for the conviction we have that Jesus did wonderful things. But it is not adequate for the refusal to acknowledge any enhancement of the wonderfulness of these works. Historical critics who recognize "miracle" embellishments in certain Gospel narratives will not allow that this recognition invalidates the whole historical foundation of the Gospel. And in all frankness the validity of this position must be acknowledged. Further, the recognition of "miracle" embellishments by no means indicates what Gore calls the "elimination of the miraculous" from the Gospels. This latter phrase is highly ambiguous; it leads from the question of *fact* to the question of the *miraculous idea*. There may be an elimination of certain events from the Gospels as unhistorical, which events have been regarded as "miracles" in the old sense. But that is a totally different matter from eliminating the supernatural, truly conceived. Reverting, however, to the historical problem, we have to differentiate clearly between an attitude which assails the historical basis of the Gospels to such a degree that not sufficient fact is left for a possible conception of Jesus, *and* an attitude which, while questioning points in the miracle stories, tenaciously holds to the general portraiture of the

[43] *Op. cit.*, p. 228.

[44] *Light from the Ancient East*, pp. 393-94.

personality of Jesus there set forth. Sanday in his later years did not share the view that to find exaggeration in these stories is to make instable the whole historical foundation for the life of our Lord. "'In a fair field and with no favour' the broad lines of the Gospel tradition and the broad lines of the Christian faith verify and establish themselves."[45] We conclude, then, that the fear represented by this argument, while begotten of high reverential considerations, is not validly caused.

(3) A yet more important and weighty consideration which may be adduced in favour of the stories as we have them is to be found upon examination of the stories themselves. By the *character* of these "miracles," and by the *subordinate position* which the Evangelists so candidly show they had in the mind of Jesus, there is, it may be held, considerable intrinsic evidence for their historical reliability. These considerations will require emphasis later in the chapter when we note the bearing of the discussion on "The Philosophy of Religion and Miracle" upon the Gospel miracles. But here their bearing on the question of the historical worth of the stories may be examined.

First, as to the *character* of the Gospel "miracles." With one or two exceptions these are acts of beneficence. The unique feature of the stories as a whole is that they do not pander to the mere sense of the marvellous. Jesus is nowhere portrayed in the Gospels as performing "miracles" for any egotistic ends nor in order to compel belief in Himself. The Christ set before us in the Gospels is one who shrank from a display of power, such as would pander, as He knew, to the "miracle hunger" of the people. The "signs" which they so much wanted He refused, or was unable, to give. To "tell them plainly" by displays of "supernatural" power was not one of His ways to lead them to the truth revealed in Himself (cf. John, 10 : 24). When He did do "wonders," their spontaneous beneficence impressed more than their "miraculousness." Only on one occasion were the people so impressed by the power displayed that they wanted to make Him there and then their "king" (cf. John, 6 : 15). Now this consistency in the beneficence of the "miracle" activity of Christ, it may with considerable cogency be pointed out, cannot be paralleled from any other source of miracle stories. The comparative study of religion affords no parallel. The "miracles" of Buddha, Muhammad, and the others are of the kind which the mythopoeic faculty of man would lead us to expect — acts whose main feature is their display of supernaturally evidential power. This is also true of the "miracles" of the apocryphal Gospels. There we find a crop of miracle stories so entirely shocking to the moral sense that we can only wonder how they could have possibly been associated with the Jesus of the Gospels we know.[46] If, therefore, the unusual powers revealed in the Gospel miracles are to be treated as analogous to the miracle stories from other sources, and to be similarly "explained" or explained away, how are we to account, it may be asked, for this very important and considerable *differentia?*

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[45] *Bishop Gore's Challenge to Criticism*, p. 29.

So far it has not seemed to us that historical criticism has given adequate consideration to this contention. If the "miracle hunger" was a dominant feature of the disciples' mentality, it may be asked: How did it happen that they were kept to so great an extent from satisfying it? Is this to be explained by the overwhelming impress that the beneficent character of Christ's personality had made upon them, so that when the "miracle-hunger" of their nature commenced to manifest itself, it was curbed and "directed" by this more dominant influence? *That* kind of explanation, some historical critics will give in accounting for this unique feature of the Gospel "miracles." To other critics, however, the conviction that the events really happened in large measure as they are narrated seems more historically adequate for so unexampled a phenomenon. Such will be inclined to ask: If these "miracles" did not really happen, what "miraculous" kind of men had these Galileans become that they set forth these events as so almost entirely congruous with the personality they describe? How did they so largely escape in their narratives from the tendency which is supposed to have governed their minds, and narrate to us not "wonders" but acts of love?

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[46] Cf., *e.g., The Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew* translated in Vol. XVI of the Anti-Nicene Christian Library. The recently published *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 1924) by Dr. M. R. James should be referred to by those who wish to make a fuller study of apocryphal miracles.

Second, the *subordinate position* which "miracles" have in the consciousness of Jesus as portrayed in the Gospels is another feature on which stress may be laid in this connection. Not only are these acts of His beneficent, but there are indications in the Gospels to show that to Jesus himself "miraculous" power did not supply the "evidence" which the miracle-hunger spirit is supposed to crave. He said that people would not be persuaded to amend their ways even "if one rises from the dead" (Luke, 16 : 31). Mark tells us that in Jesus' own country, where the people were sceptical of Him, "He could there do no mighty work, save that He laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them" (Mark, 6 : 5). On several occasions He commanded that His works of healing should not be widely published (Mark, 1 : 44, 3 : 12, 5 : 43, 7 : 36), which fact surely indicates that to Christ there was nothing more "evidential" in His works than in His teaching. When the Pharisees sought from Him a sign, He answered: "There shall no sign be given unto this generation" (Mark, 8 : 12). Now those who are supposed to be prone to invent or grossly to exaggerate "miracle stories" do so, it will be pointed out, because they mean to them a very great deal, that is, that they are "evidential." People are eager for a "sign" because of the proof it is supposed to give of "supernatural" power. It is therefore, to say the least, somewhat surprising, so it will be suggested, that if the Evangelists had this proneness, they should have so faithfully narrated the subordinate position which these "signs" had to Jesus. Some will see in this surprising fact the ingenuous simplicity and candour of the Evangelists, in that they narrate conscientiously words and attitudes of Jesus in regard to "signs" which are hostile to their (*i.e.*, the Evangelists') own view. This position is taken, for example, by Dr. Percy Gardner, who says: "Therefore in rejecting the literal truth of miraculous tales in the Gospel, we follow the line clearly indicated by our Founder."[47] To others it will not seem an unfair comment upon this position to say that the "candour" of the Gospel writers is therefore seen in their being *accurate* historians in recording certain things and *inaccurate* historians in recording other things. These will be inclined to ask such questions as: Is there not an alternative explanation of the candour of the Evangelists, namely, that the disciples recorded candidly *all* the facts? Cannot this candour be regarded as an argument for allowing a firmer historical basis to the "miracle" narratives than many will allow? To some this logical and consistent candour may seem as historically likely as the illogical and inconsistent candour which the former view may be regarded as presupposing.

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[47] *Op. cit.*, pp. 227–28.

Reference in this connection may also be made to the remark made in that Gospel which is generally regarded as least historically trustworthy. "John did no miracles," says the writer of the fourth Gospel (10 : 41). Here again we have a remark indicative of the "candour" of the Evangelists. Again it may be interpreted in different ways. Some will see in it the historical candour of the narrator who here acknowledges that the "miracle" tendency, which is held to have determined his account of the stories of Jesus, is not allowed by himself to be applied to John the Baptist. Dr. Moffatt says, speaking of "the so-called 'miraculous' atmosphere" of the Gospels, that John the Baptist "remained outside this influence."[48] The more conservative historical critic, however, may raise such questions as: May not this candour be interpreted quite otherwise? Does not this remark of the Fourth Evangelist suggest that the "miraculous atmosphere" did not dominate the writer's mind? If the "miraculous atmosphere" played a considerable rôle in the compilation of the Gospels, is it not inherently likely that miracles would have been also attributed to John — as they had been to Elijah to whom he was likened? (Luke, 1 : 17, cf. Matthew, 11 : 14 and 17 : 12, and John, 1 : 25.)

Such considerations seem to lead many to the conclusion that the Gospels bear witness to the intrinsic trustworthiness of the "miracle stories" by their frankness and their conscientious candour.

B. On the other hand, those who maintain that the abnormal element in the "nature miracles" is not to be regarded as historical may support their thesis with the following contentions.

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[48] *Op. cit.*, p. 196.

(1) It has been set forth in Chapter II that all sacred literature reveals the tendency to invest great historic personalities with the halo of veneration. This "reverence" increasing with time, unconsciously influences the minds of their biographers. "The high esteem in which they are held more or less controls biographers, and begets a tendency to leave out humble facts, and tone down traits indicative of pronounced individuality, and so to construct a story smooth and commonplace in all that it reports of word or deed, and exhibiting a character free from all peculiarities over which the weakest might stumble, and just on that account possessing less interest for all who can discern and value originality and power."[49]

Closely related to this "increasing reverence" is the one-time universal idea that great saintly characters are able to do extraordinary things as a kind of "sign" of their divine mission. The "increasing reverence" tendency and the idea that amazing deeds are possible to outstanding personalities go together, and result in the legendary "miracle" tales which have gathered round the founders of religion.

That these tendencies are manifest in some degree in our Gospels, it is held, it is not possible to deny. The late Dr. Bruce, in the passage which we have just quoted, went on to say that "while it would be contrary to fact to say that any of them (*i.e.*, the Evangelists) exhibit the characteristics of biographical writing arising out of the sense of decorum in a highly developed form," yet "calm investigation may constrain the admission that the rudiments of these are to be found in one of them." Further, certain tales referred to as narrated in Matthew are acknowledged by *all* as legendary. It is therefore, it may be held, no longer a question as to "increasing" biographical reverence, but as to its "amount"; no longer a question as to the *fact* of legendary accretion, but as to its *degree*.

(2) The "miracles" in dispute, it may be further pointed out, are found upon critical investigation of the Synoptic Gospels to be very few in number. Indeed the crux of the historical problem

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[49] A. B. Bruce, *With Open Face* (1896), p. 25.

may be said to centre round the following found in the Marcan narrative: The Stilling of the Tempest, The Feeding of the Five Thousand, and The Walking on the Sea. These, if taken as scientifically accurate narratives, postulate respectively: (1) that Christ had command over an inanimate object — the sea, (2) that a small quantity of bread and fish, filling a certain cubic capacity in space, and of a certain determinate weight, within a very short period of time both increased very considerably in the cubic capacity of space it occupied, and, presumably, added very considerably to its weight,[50] and (3) that Christ's body transcended for a certain period of time the "law of gravity." [51]

[50] This is the *fact* which the full historicity of the narrative demands, and in the interests of clarity and intellectual integrity it is well that it should be recognized. We find it difficult to appreciate the view of Dr. Headlam (*Life and Teaching of Jesus the Christ*, p. 278) that "it is not necessary to trouble about the means by which it (the feeding of the five thousand) took place. A miracle and a wonderful event may have taken place in many ways, and we need not disbelieve it because our imagination cannot picture to ourselves the way in which it could have happened." Now, while indeed we do not reject an event because we cannot "picture to ourselves" the way in which it happened — as that, for example, we do not reject the *fact* of an oak tree because we cannot "picture to ourselves" how it could come from an acorn — at the same time it is the *very function* of science "to trouble about the means by which it took place." Further it is necessary that those who seek to defend the feeding of the five thousand should clearly state whether they take literally the words "they were all filled." If they do, then they are, we think, compelled to accept the fact of what happened being as we have stated it. If, on the other hand, they regard the story as having its roots in the familiar fact that a certain degree of mental or spiritual exaltation makes one oblivious of physical needs — so that while our stomachs may be empty we are no longer "hungry" — it is well to point out that they do not accept the precise historicity of the story and are no longer defending "the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand."

[51] If Christ really walked "on the sea," as both Mark and Matthew assert, this is the *fact* which has to be accepted. Those who accept this fact are not compelled to regard it as explicable by the volitional utilization by Jesus of "supernatural power"; they may regard this fact as a parallel kind of fact to such psychical phenomena known as "levitations."

Those on the other hand to whom both the theories suggested above — viz., (1) that of interventionistic supernaturalism, and (2) that suggested by the acceptance of levitation phenomena — are abhorrent, are compelled to reject the historicity of the statement that Christ really walked on the sea. These may, following the suggestions of Paulus, regard the historical basis of the incident as a meeting of the disciples by Christ in the shallow waters of the edge of the lake. This interpretation of the incident has its own difficulties to encounter, but the Straussian method of pouring ridicule upon it, in the interests of his own mythical theory, must be regarded as suspect. The reader may be interested to compare Dr. Salmon's sympathetic treatment of this view of Paulus, in *The Human Element in the Gospels* (pp. 320–25), with his rejection of it as improbable and absurd in his earlier *Introduction to the New Testament* (3rd ed., 1888), pp. 10–11.

Are the specific details in these stories which necessitate the above theories to be accepted as historical or no?

Those who answer this question in the negative do so on the ground that they find it easier to believe that the imagination of the Primitive Church filled in these details than that they should have occurred precisely as narrated. The whole ancient world was full of miracles. To find the New Testament wholly free from them would present to us a psychologically unique phenomenon. The disciples need not be regarded as wholly free, it is held, from the desire to attribute "wonders" to their master, nor in point of generally recognized fact *can* they be. Universally also it is agreed, it may be contended, that Matthew at least manifests a "motive" in close relationship to this — in that he so definitely portrays Jesus as fulfilling Old Testament prophecies. "Are any sections in the Gospel Story due," asked Dr. Moffatt, "to the naïve desire of presenting Jesus as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies? . . . Did the exigencies of controversy with the Jews lead early Christians to create as well as recollect stories of their Master which bore out their claims on His behalf?" To which his answer is, "Historical research answers this question unhesitatingly in the affirmative. The real issue is the extent to which it can be shown to have operated." [52] And it is easier to believe, it may be contended, that this tendency operated in the *creation* of the "miraculous" details in these stories than that they were historical. "We deem it probable," says Wendland, "that when, in the Gospel story, the multitude was miraculously fed (Mark, 6 : 30–44, 8 : 1–10) the loaves were not multiplied in the disciples' hands, that at the marriage in Cana (John, 2 : 1–11) the water was not turned into wine, nor did Jesus walk on the waves of the sea of Galilee (Mark, 6 : 48)" [53] The view of Dr. Moffatt is similar. "The fact that a story like that of the miraculous feeding of the crowd belongs to the primitive Galilean tradition, is no argument against the hypothesis that it represents some historical incident embroidered with supernatural colouring; the latter process did not require any great length of time." [54]

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[52] *The Approach to the New Testament*, p. 87.

[53] *Miracles and Christianity*, p. 227.

[54] *The Approach to the New Testament*, p. 133.

Further in support of this view, it has been frequently pointed out that the writers of the Gospels were "men whose minds were steeped in the Old Testament." They believed in the historicity of many events there recorded of prophets of old. Could their great master do less than those? "This Old Testament influence alone," wrote the late Dr. Sanday, "is enough to explain all the so-called 'nature miracles.'"[55] The specific "miracle" of the feeding of the five thousand is "explained" by the influence on the Evangelists' minds of the narrative in II Kings, 4 : 43–44, where we are told that when the man of Baalshalishah had had the twenty loaves of barley put before an hundred men, to the astonishment of his servants "they did eat and left thereof, according to the word of the Lord." The point in the Gospel story which is questioned (viz., "they were all filled") is regarded as having its source in this narrative. This "Old Testament influence" argument has of course been employed for a century or more, and is very familiar to students of the subject. Strauss ascribed the growth of the story of the feeding of the five thousand to the Old Testament.[56] Keim, likewise, spoke about "the miracles of feeding of Moses and Elijah" being "introduced into His (*i.e.*, Christ's) life."[57] Similarly, it has frequently been maintained that the theory of the ascension of our Lord, which regards it as a "physical elevation of His body," arose through the influence of the Enoch and Elijah assumptions of the Old Testament.

Further, it is maintained that the writers of the Gospels had the "midrashic habit of mind," that is, the tendency revealed in Midrash to make the specific details of a story subsidiary to the spiritual truth it is meant to convey. Midrash was described suggestively in the Talmud as a hammer which wakes to life the sparks slumbering in the rock. The mental attitude which it betokens is one far distant, of course, from that of the modern scientific writer, but was, on the other hand, — it has to be remembered, — quite "modern" in the days when the Gospels were written. "This midrashic habit of mind," it has been maintained, "was one of the elements in the mental equipment of those who first drew up the tales about Jesus, and it has to be recognised here and there as a possible factor in their composition." [58]

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[55] *Bishop Gore's Challenge to Criticism*, p. 25. Cf. also the same writer's *Divine Overruling*, pp. 70–74.

[56] Cf. *Life of Jesus* (Eng. tr. in 3 vols., 1846), Vol. II, pp. 414 ff.

[57] *The History of Jesus of Nazara*, Vol. III, p. 165.

Such considerations have led many historical critics to reject as unhistorical the "miracle" element in the "nature miracles" of the Gospels; and not only so, but to maintain that the time has quite definitely come when the teachers of the Church should frankly, yet of course in no destructive spirit, declare the same to the people. Dr. Friedrich Loofs has, for example, said: "It is therefore in my opinion the duty of all honest friends of the truth among the leading Christians to accustom their congregations to the thought that not the whole biblical tradition about Jesus is undoubtedly historical. . . . This is never to be forgotten whenever we deal with the miracles told in the Gospels. . . . Nobody who is acquainted with historical research can deny that we can even within the Gospels discover a dash of exaggeration of the marvellous which later on led to the fictions of the apocryphal Gospels. . . . About some miracles told in the Gospels we may assert with a certain amount of assurance that tradition reported here what never happened in this manner." [59] Those who maintain such conclusions do not, it is important to note, assail the veracity of the Gospel writers. These did not, it is held, of definite purpose set out to exaggerate the wonderful features in the works of Christ. The influences referred to acted on the minds of the Evangelists in a way perfectly familiar to the student of legendary phenomena the whole world over. When the unscientific and legend-loving mentality of the age, as exemplified in the profusion of "miracles" scattered throughout all ancient literature, is considered, the New Testament writers are seen to be strikingly immune from its influence. Remembering further the amazing growth of legendary material which came afterwards, as seen in the apocryphal Gospels, we can only be thankful, it is held, that so little of such is to be found in the canonical Gospels. Our regard for the Gospel writers is heightened when we note to how comparatively small an extent they were influenced by tendencies which almost completely nullify both the historicity and the religious value of extra-canonical Gospels.

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[58] Moffatt in *The Approach to the New Testament*, p. 89.

[59] *What Is the Truth about Jesus Christ?* pp. 124–25. In regard to the difficult task before Christian preachers and teachers here, the following words of Ménégoz on the inconsistency of those who reject in theory the doctrine of literal inspiration yet continue to maintain it in their biblical studies are worth quoting: "*Que l'on ménage les faibles, rien de mieux; c'est une affaire de tact pédagogique. Mais que par égard pour les faibles, on refuse aux forts une nourriture substantielle, c'est une lourde faute qui porte un préjudice incalculable à la prospérité de l'Église*" (*La Notion Biblique du Miracle*, p. 13).

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Different minds will probably feel in different measure the respective weights of these *pro* and *con* considerations, which we have sought as impartially as possible to set forth. Candour, however, necessitates the statement that the latter considerations (under *B*) weigh increasingly with literary and historical critics of the Gospel narratives. Dr. Sanday in 1914 felt it necessary to remind us that "it is surely a fact of some significance," [60] that the scholars of Germany had arrived with a considerable degree of unanimity at the conclusions which we know that he himself, after a lifetime of historical research into the Gospels, slowly and with reverential caution, yet in the end with assured and untroubled calm, had reached.

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It is necessary, however, before parting with this phase of the question, to note the limitations of the historico-critical method in its approach to this matter. An unfortunate impression has been created by some not too careful utterances on the part of some historical critics of the Gospels — to the effect that critical considerations alone were adequate to extirpate *all* "miracle" narratives from the Gospels. Doubtless the impression arose through the difficulty of avoiding ambiguous language in so many-sided a theme as "miracle." At the same time it is well that the limitations of the historical method should be noted. Only by complete frankness on both sides is it possible to dissipate contentious and poisonous misunderstandings.

In the last resort it is not historical considerations which lead many to regard as unhistorical the "miracle" element in certain

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[60] *Bishop Gore's Challenge to Criticism*, p. 29.

"nature miracles." A "nature miracle" like the feeding of the five thousand is as well "evidenced" in the Gospel narratives as any other fact or saying which is there narrated. It is found in all the Gospels, and a careful scrutiny of the respective narratives does not lead any candid mind to see that Mark's earliest narrative is any less wonderful than those which followed — the point which we have marked in the subsequent note about Matthew's possible increasing of the number of people being immaterial in this connection. Presuppositions must therefore decide the issue here as in other cases. It is hardly open to question that the *real* ground for expunging the "miracle" features from some of these narratives is not that there is insufficient "evidence," or even that the evidence is "not good enough" (for it is difficult to see under the circumstances of the case how it could be "better"), but the *à priori* conviction that these things are intrinsically incredible.

That this is so is implicitly acknowledged by candid historical critics, though expressed in different ways. Whether the Gospel "nature miracles" are rejected owing to their "extreme historic improbability," [61] or owing to what is regarded as their "impossibility," the judgment in neither case is a strictly historical one. Dr. Moffatt recognizes this when he says: "The last word about New Testament problems, like the consciousness of Jesus or any of the so-called 'supernatural' phenomena, does not lie with the historical method." [62] Dr. Loofs made a similar avowal when he said that "to do full justice" to the life and person of Jesus is beyond the limits of historical science; [63] and again when he said that "the assumption that the life of Jesus was a purely human one, and that we can appreciate His personality as a purely human one, is false." [64] This may be regarded as another way of saying that it is impossible to rewrite the Gospels so as to achieve a portrait of Jesus in any degree consistent with the one we have, if we are dominated by the idea that there was nothing exceptional in His activities. So much is recognized by historical science herself.

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[61] Dr. Percy Gardner, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

[62] *Op. cit.*, p. 203.

[63] *Op. cit.*, p. 85.

[64] *Op. cit.*, pp. 128–29.

It seems well, also, before leaving this section to note that many past attempts to rewrite the Gospel story with the "miracles" left out achieved their end by methods that are no longer recognized as historically valid. Of these attempts a few historic illustrations may be given.

Thomas Woolston's *Discourses on the Miracles of our Saviour* (1727–1729) occasioned considerable controversy in the first half of the eighteenth century, as may be seen from the very long list of books catalogued under his name in the British Museum for that period. The dominant aim inspiring these once-famous Discourses, which may still be read with interest and not without profit, was the endeavour to show that the miracles of the Gospels, implying, as Woolston maintained, "absurdities, improbabilities, and incredibilities," were "only related as prophetical and parabolical narratives."[65] In these Discourses the allegorical method can be seen wholeheartedly at work. Woolston's central purpose in dealing, for example, with the Resurrection of Christ was, as he expressed it, "to make way for the understanding what the Fathers write of the mystical Resurrection of Jesus out of the Grave of the Letter of the Law and the Prophets; of which mystical Resurrection of our spiritual Jesus, the evangelical story of the Resurrection of a carnal Christ is but mere Type and Shadow."[66] He interpreted, also, the healing of the woman with an issue of blood as "a mystical Healing of the Haemorrhage of the Church."[67]

In support of his allegorical interpretation of the Gospel miracles, Woolston cited the authority of some of the Fathers. In so doing he did not do justice to the position of those who like Origen maintained *both* the historic fact *and* the allegorical meaning. Nor is it altogether easy to determine if Woolston in maintaining the allegorical meaning gives up the literal one.

That there may be some truth in the allegorical method of interpretation has been already suggested (cf. *The Saints' Rising* and *Midrashim Influences*). But to regard all these miracle narratives as *intended* by the Evangelists to be taken in this way is to lead to an attitude of complete historical despair. The allegorical method of interpreting the story of the walking on the water, for example, no doubt is valuable in setting forth this profound truth of religion, that Christ was "borne by his faith in God over the troubled waters of life."[68] But if the Evangelists *meant* that, and only that, by the story one can only say that their method of writing has been, and must continue to be, singularly fruitful in misconceptions. No! Without the stultification or complete surrender of one's own intellect it is impossible to conceive that the Evangelists did not *intend* to narrate a historical incident. All such "allegorising" methods of dealing with the miracle stories of the Gospels signally fail in fidelity to the historical method and spirit.

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[65] Cf. *Second Discourse*, pp. 3–4 (London ed., 1729).

[66] Cf. *Sixth Discourse* (London ed., 1729), p. 2.

[67] Cf. *Second Discourse*.

Strauss's epoch-making attempt to write a life of Jesus with the "miracles" left out, was clearly in large measure the product of his presuppositions, and not of impartial historical inquiry. His method of approach to the Gospels he himself described in the Preface to his first *Leben Jesu* as "the mythical," a method opposed equally to the orthodox "supernaturalism" of his day, and to the "naturalism" chiefly represented by Paulus. This "mythical" mode of interpretation relinquishes, to use Strauss' own words, "the historical reality of the sacred narratives in order to preserve to them an absolute inherent truth."[69]

With all the philosophical implications of Strauss' method and spirit in dealing with the Gospels it is here of course impossible to deal. But in regard to his treatment of "miracles" in the Gospels, a few pertinent considerations not without interest to the present situation may be referred to. He held that "if a miracle is incompatible with history, the Gospels can be no historical sources; and if the Gospels are really historical records, miracles are not to be separated from the history of the life of Jesus."[70] It is the alternative here presented by Strauss which demands examination. He began his task by refusing to admit the conception of miracle, a refusal which we are not now concerned with criticizing, for it leads us from fact to idea. But from that philosophic idea he attacked the historical truth of the Gospel narratives, having leaped to the conclusion (or having accepted the "orthodox" conclusion) that the historical truth of these Gospel narratives necessarily involved the "supernatural" conception of miracle he was concerned to repudiate, and that it stands or falls with that conception. The Gospels, therefore, were to be regarded as embodying late myths.

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[68] *The Miraculous in Christianity*, Drummond, p. 20.

[69] Cf. his *Introduction* (1846, Eng. ed.), Vol. I, p. 48.

[70] Cf. his *Introduction*.

It is obvious that Strauss' method of dealing with the Gospels was almost entirely *à priori*. The narratives must be mythical, since "miracles" are there recorded, and "miracles" are impossible. Being mythical, the narratives must be late in date, for Strauss had to allow due time for the growth of the vast mythical creation represented to him by the Gospels.

Now Keim was well within the truth when he maintained "against the Straussian storm" that "the Gospels have never produced upon any sound mind the impression that they rest solely upon late myths and subsequent invention." [71] And that one consideration alone seems adequate to the overthrow of this "mythical" theory.

But further, and chiefly, the Gospel "miracle" narratives do not *of necessity* stand or fall with the acceptance or rejection of the interventionist conception of miracle. It is this confusion of thought which renders suspect so much "anti-miracle" writing. The same confusion Strauss frequently manifested in his first *Life of Jesus*. The main criterion which he employed for distinguishing the unhistorical in the Gospels he expressed thus: "When the narration is irreconcilable with the known and universal laws which govern the course of events." [72] His conclusion from this was as follows: "When therefore we meet with an account of certain phenomena or events of which it is either expressly stated or implied that they were produced immediately by God himself . . . or by human beings possessed of supernatural powers . . . such an account is *in so far* to be considered as not historical." [73] It is not clear how far he guards himself by his italicized "*in so far*." But in any case his conclusion is a "*non*

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[71] *Op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 170.
[72] *Life of Jesus*, Vol. I, p. 87.
[73] Vol. I, p. 87.

sequitur" of his premise. It does not follow that because an event narrated in the Gospels was regarded by the writer as implying a "supernatural intervention" therefore the event is unhistorical. We may illustrate this fallacious method of dealing with Gospel incidents from Strauss' treatment of the incident which relates the healing of a blind man. "A natural cure," he says, "could not have been effected otherwise than by a gradual process; the narrative states the cure to have been immediate; if therefore the history be understood to record a natural occurrence, the most essential particular is incorrectly represented, and consequently all security for the truth of the otherwise natural remainder is gone, and the real fact cannot be discovered without the aid of arbitrary conjecture." [74] The arbitrariness of this method of procedure will be obvious to all who are familiar with modern instances of the *sudden* recovery of sight by the blind.

Strauss, therefore, in utilizing an *idea* for the rejection of historical facts was no true historian. His idea may be right or wrong, that is not the point. The point is that in applying his idea wholesale in the *à priori* way he did to the Gospel narratives, he was led to positions which historical criticism now firmly repudiates — as, for example, in his late dating of these narratives. The use of presuppositions may often indeed be necessary in seeking to appreciate the historical worth of Gospel narratives: but to eliminate the historicity of the narratives on the sole ground of the impossibility of accepting the miracle concept which they may be held to imply is a proceeding which those who have a high regard for historical investigation must repudiate.

Neither can Renan's *Vie de Jésus* be regarded as a strictly historical work. It is a beautiful romance, but not strict history. Renan's imaginative genius led him to create rather than to seek to record the past. While his *Vie de Jésus* has the abiding merit of being a product of real art, it is not now possible to regard it, as Renan himself would have desired, as a work of strict historical inquiry. The artist rather than the scientific historian is in the ascendent. Most candid readers of this artistically beautiful product of mingled scepticism and sentiment will agree with the judgment of Weinel: "An advanced historical research has condemned the work taken as a whole."[75] Renan's romantic imagination was governed by his philosophic presuppositions. To him the "miraculous" was regarded as a supernatural interference with Nature. The "wonders" of the Gospels seemed to him "miracles" in that sense. Hence they could not have happened. They were, as he said, "acts of illusion or folly"; and Renan leaves us uncertain as to how much was due to "illusion" (*i.e.*, how much did not happen) and how much was due to "folly" (*i.e.*, how much had a historical basis in Jesus the Thaumaturgus).[76]

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[74] *Op cit.*, Vol. I, p. 93.

These illustrations from the past serve to show that in deciding the historical question as to whether or in what degree the "miracle" stories of the Gospels really happened, the notion of what is possible and what is impossible in large measure settles the issue.

The distinction usually drawn today between the "healing miracles" and the "nature miracles" serves further to illustrate this contention. This distinction is of course a convenient one. Some may, however, continue to challenge whether the very frequently maintained view that the first are to be accepted as historically reliable, and the second to be regarded as due to legendary exaggeration, is an altogether satisfactory generalization. At any rate when the first are referred to as "*supra naturam*" and the second as "*contra naturam*"[77] the right of historical criticism to make this distinction is bound to be challenged.

In closing this section of the chapter it seems well to look more closely at this position since it is now so generally maintained. The position is a twofold one, and may be thus expressed: (1) "That the life of Christ can be disentangled from 'miracles,'" and (2) that "Christ always assumed that He could do 'mighty works,' and from them His life cannot be separated."[78] The same twofold contention is expressed by another writer in these words: "The familiar and extraordinary miracles of Jesus may be easily separated from His life. His daily acts of healing and help do not belong here; for they are not miracles in the strict sense of the word." [79]

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[75] *Jesus in the Nineteenth Century and After*, H. Weinel, p. 156.

[76] Cf. *Vie de Jésus*, Chap. 16.

[77] Cf. *Bishop Gore's Challenge to Criticism*, Sanday, p. 23.

[78] The words are Abbott's in *The Kernel and the Husk*, p. 159.

This attitude is open to the criticism that it implies an implicit sense of certitude, that the healing works are "natural" and that the others are "unnatural" or contra-natural. It is this *à priori* certitude which in large measure leads to the acceptance of the first and to the rejection of the second. "All we have to do is to subtract the unnatural from the supernatural, and the remainder (so far as it can be ascertained) will be truth." [80]

That "all we have to do," however, it may be pointed out, is just the whole question. For who shall tell us what *is* "unnatural," in other words what *is* impossible? If only we had omniscience to know the bounds of natural possibility in a universe which contains, as we are beginning to see, potencies we do not yet fathom, we then indeed might confidently say, "Such and such events are 'impossible.'" But since we have not such omniscience we can in a measure understand the conservative historical caution which is in no hurry to rule out as "impossible" certain beneficent acts recorded of Jesus which to our knowledge and potency seem so "impossible."

Some justification may be found for this attitude in the recollection that at one time rationalistic criticism frankly rejected the healing works of Christ. We sought in Chapter IV to show the reasons which have brought about the present readiness to accept them as on the whole historical. The question then is: Do these reasons suggest to us that the time *may* come when certain "nature miracles" of the Gospels will be seen to be not impossible? And even if they be forever "impossible" to us lesser men, are we to say that they were impossible to Him who lived so much nearer than we do to the source of all truth and all power — God?

The last question may seem to some to call forth the criticism that it suggests a necessary connection between moral and spiritual personality *and* wonder-working power. Such a suggestion it is far from our purpose to make. We have no evidence to prove, indeed much to disprove, the idea that sanctity and "occult power" necessarily go together. Dr. Percy Gardner utilizes this contention when he says: "One does not see why a superiority to mankind of a moral and spiritual kind should confer extraordinary powers over inanimate nature."[81] Elsewhere he points out: "This is noteworthy, that according to spiritualists the power of working physical marvels has no close connection with moral or spiritual pre-eminence; it is attached to persons of a particular nervous organisation."[82] This indeed is true, as every student of the subject knows. But it is also true that in the lives of saints there are many stories to credit the belief that a highly developed spiritual nature may at times transcend physical limitations to which the "earthly" multitude are subject. And to emphasize this consideration does not involve the suggestion of a necessary connection between spirituality and occult potentiality; for no one, we take it, would regard the *absence* of such power as essential to moral and spiritual pre-eminence.

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[79] *What is Religion?* Bousset, p. 287.

[80] Sanday in *The Modern Churchman*, January-February, 1919, p. 480.

The extent to which these considerations should be allowed to weigh in estimating whether the "nature miracles" happened or no in anything like the form in which they are narrated, remains, and probably must remain for the present, the unsettled question. That there are *some* stories in the Gospels, which if narrated by a scientific historian would be much less "wonderful," no candid critic would dream of denying. But the question as to where the line is to be drawn between scientific facts and exaggeration accretions remains the vexed and baffling question. For ourselves we do not dare to say that that alone was possible for Him to which we can find assured historical parallels. We do not even feel disposed to rule out as unhistorical such seemingly "unnatural" stories as the raisings from the dead.[83] While both historical and deeper considerations may occasion intrinsic difficulties with the Lazarus story, regarding the other two such stories in the Gospels we do not think we are shut up to the view that such incidents would contravene the "laws of nature" and so be impossible. In regard to the story of Jairus' daughter, we have a strikingly vivid yet sober narrative which commends its historicity to the candid critic. It is recorded by the three Synoptic writers, and Mark even gives to us the very Aramaic words Jesus spoke to the unconscious girl, "*Talitha cumi.*" The only question that really arises in regard to this story is, Was she really dead? But this seemingly simple issue is not quite so simple as it seems. What, we are compelled to ask, is Death? At what precise moment is it complete and final? What precise conditions make the separation of the spirit from the body an irrecoverable one? The simple alternative "She was either dead or living," does not satisfy the issue here, and it is idle for either the conservative or the rationalistic critic, with their different *motifs*, to say that it does. We cannot here forego the pleasure of quoting the words of M. Berguer on this matter, corroborative as they are of our own suggestion. "Jesus," he says, "must have felt, in certain cases, that a personal intervention was necessary, and that the life was throbbing just beyond. We know too little about what life and death are to solve the question. In what degree is death complete? Is it a resurrection when, by artificial respiration, we bring a drowned person back to life? Jesus, himself, in any case, did not concern himself with these questions. When he felt impelled to intervene, he did intervene, with full confidence in the inwardly realised strength of the Father who had sent him, but he did not always intervene, and he never intervened when death had taken place too long before." [84]

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[81] *Exploratio Evangelica*, p. 232.

[82] *A Historic View of the New Testament* (1901), p. 155.

[83] "Son of the Widow of Nain" (Luke, 7:11–17). "Daughter of Jairus" (Matt. 9:18–26; Mark, 5:21–43; Luke, 8:40–56). "Lazarus" (John, 11:1–44).

The late Dr. Sanday regarded the question as one of making two ends meet, the two ends being, we presume, what is narrated and what is possible. "Deduct something perhaps from the historical statement of the fact; and add something to our conception of what is possible in the course of Nature, and if the two ends do not exactly meet, we may yet see that they are not very far from meeting." [85] The amount of the respective deduction and addition is of course the question. Dr. Sanday in his later years deducted more from the narratives than some feel able as yet to do. The whole question is encompassed with difficulties, and perhaps different minds may continue to feel in different measure the force of different arguments. What exactly happened we shall never indeed know to a demonstration. To be in a position to say with conviction, these "miracles" did happen or did not happen, we should, I fear, have had to be there. But since we were not there, we have to use our minds as best we may to reconstruct the historical situation, having as our chief guide these Gospel narratives. In this attempted reconstruction we shall face arguments, reasonings, probabilities, guesses from different sides. The argument which wins our verdict will be that which fits in with the whole tendency of our mind. It is useless for anyone to claim to confine himself to an impartial examination of the written sources for these "miracles." Every time we try to do this, we are driven back to our *à priori* view as to what is "naturally" possible. And the question remains unsettled: What is the limit of that which is "naturally" possible?

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[84] *Some Aspects of the Life of Jesus*, Georges Berguer, p. 224. Cf. also *The Idea of the Holy*, Rudolf Otto (Eng. tr.), p. 215, where Otto, quoting from his own *Leben und Wirken Jesu*, asks: "Where is the margin that divides complete death from the last faint glow of the spark of life, very likely passed into unconsciousness? May not he who by his will had power to restore a consciousness confused by madness have had also the power to arrest a consciousness just vanishing over the borders of life, and even awaken again in the body one that has but just vanished?" See also E. A. Abbott in *St. Thomas of Canterbury*, Vol. II, p. 311, for the same view. See also *Expository Times*, June, 1922, pp. 404–07, where in regard even to the Lazarus story it is contended that Lazarus was not really "dead."

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So far, it is important to note, the discussion has been upon the "*miraculous fact*" in the Gospel. We have been asking, What happened? Some words must be said in concluding this chapter on the bearing of these facts on the *miraculous idea.*

(1) We sought to maintain that it is not essential to a theistic supernaturalism that any event is scientifically inexplicable. And that standpoint we maintain in regard to the "supernatural" in the Gospel.

The view that whatever Gospel "miracles" happened must not be regarded as subject to scientific explanation, is latent in the attitude of the majority of those who defend them. A past apologetic expressly dissented from all endeavours to *explain* Gospel "miracles" by scientific law.[86] This apologetic was strangely forgetful of the point that while it may be possible to prove that an event has really occurred, it is quite impossible to prove that it is not due to a natural cause. If the miraculous involves of necessity scientific inexplicability it is obvious that it is not allowable to regard any event as such. The argument that Gospel events are scientifically inexplicable involves the impossibility of regarding them as miracles. And should the defender of the traditional concept of miracle reply that it is just as inadmissible to finite minds to declare the *scientific explicability* of "miracles" as to declare their *scientific inexplicability*, the answer of the scientific historian must be that he has much more right to say that an event is explicable than the traditionalist has to say that it is not so. Further, he may point out the fundamental fallacy of the latter — namely, that he is making the question of an event's explicability involve of necessity the divinity of Him who effected it. These two are quite different questions.

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[85] *Life of Christ in Recent Research*, p. 223.

[86] Cf., *e.g.*, Steinmeyer, *The Miracles of Our Lord* (Eng. tr., 1875), p. 10.

Nevertheless, the belief in the essentiality of scientific inexplicability to the idea of " miracles " dies hard. To seek to "explain," for example, the "miracles of healing" along the lines of modern psycho-therapeutic researches is regarded by many as an endeavour to "eliminate the miraculous." [87] Some writers, scornfully brushing aside this psychological approach to the Gospel "miracles," regard Christ as the "direct channel of omnipotence." [88] Others are more careful in utterance, but the underlying essence of their objection to this method of approach is begotten of the same idea. Gore, for example, demurs "to the idea that the miracles of healing in the New Testament admit of a naturalistic interpretation." [89] The late Dr. Illingworth also demurred to the suggestion that these were "capable of naturalistic explanation." [90]

This attitude may be regarded as in part the outcome of a scientific caution which is suspicious of the hasty generalizations of those to whom modern psychology is held to "explain everything." So far, indeed, it is wise and worthy of consideration. It is, further, begotten of a desire to maintain the trustworthiness of the Gospel narratives. For it is feared that this psycho-therapeutic "explanation" of the "healing miracles" is only possible if these are reduced in magnitude.[91]

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[87] *The Miracles of Jesus*, E. O. Davies, p. 18.

[88] Cf. *The Master Preacher*, A. R. Bond, p. 110.

[89] *Belief in God*, p. 249.

[90] *Divine Immanence* (cheap ed.), Chap. IV, p. 54.

This attitude, however, seems invalidated by a fundamental misconception. To "explain" Gospel "miracles" along the lines of psycho-therapy does not involve a "naturalistic" interpretation. The term "naturalistic" is the adjective from the substantive "naturalism." Now "naturalism," rightly employed, is a philosophic term, and not a scientific. It denotes a materialistic interpretation, and not a mere scientific description, of things. The adjective "naturalistic" therefore applied to an event implies that such is finally "explicable" along materialistic lines. But this is by no means necessarily involved in seeking scientifically to explain the "healing miracles." For, in the first case, as we sought to show in Chapter III, a "scientific explanation" can never in the ultimate sense explain anything. And, in the second place, the very term *psycho*-therapy may be taken as suggesting an anti-naturalistic interpretation, and as itself negating materialistic views. What indeed is *psycho-therapy?* The term posits the supremacy of the *mind* in our whole constitution. It suggests that the physical is subsidiary to the spiritual, that personality is a factor which cannot be overlooked amid mere physical sequences. A psycho-therapeutic "explanation" of an event is therefore by no means equivalent to a "naturalistic" interpretation.

Then, further, to approach the "miracles of healing" along these lines is not *necessarily* to reduce them in magnitude. We may refuse to admit that Christ could not do things which modern psycho-therapy cannot now explain. We may be very far from the attitude which denies that He could do anything which we cannot do. We may be on our guard against a scientific dogmatism which would confine the historically possible within the limits of present knowledge and capacity. That the psycho-therapeutic approach to the healing works of Christ has been usually held in the past to necessitate their reduction in magnitude must of course be acknowledged. But of this *necessity*, we must question the validity. It is a necessity which merely disguises an unscientific dogmatism. Strauss and most of the nineteenth-century expungers of "miracles" from the Gospels were guilty of it. Speaking of Christ's words to the woman with the issue of blood (Matthew, 9 : 22), "thy faith has made thee whole," Strauss added the significant note: "He could not have expressed Himself *more truly*, *more modestly*, *more correctly*, *or more precisely*." [92] These adverbial qualifications disguise the dogmatism of which we are thinking. This talk of "modesty" in Christ's attitude sprang in Strauss' mind from the notion that what was then known of "faith healing" determined the limits within which Christ must have performed His cures. Schmiedel suggested the same attitude when he wrote: "It is quite permissible for us to regard as historical only those of the class which even at the present day physicians are able to effect by psychical methods." [93]

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[91] This is the contention of R. J. Ryle in *The Hibbert Journal* (April, 1907), "The Neurotic Theory of the Miracles of Healing."

Against such an attitude modern psychical studies utter a clear warning. Enough has been already discovered and achieved in the cure of physical ailments to show that it is not at present desirable to mark the limits of possible achievements along these lines. Even the distinction usually made between functional disorders and organic diseases cannot with complete security be regarded today as a *final* one. For this reason, therefore, the attitudes both of those who utilize this distinction in order to prove the unhistorical character of Gospel healings of "organic" diseases *and* of those who utilize the distinction in order to disprove the psycho-therapeutic explanation of the "healing-miracles" are exceedingly questionable. To see something analogous to Christ's works of healing in modern instances does not therefore necessarily involve our diminishing His works to the limits of what is possible today.

The following historical consideration at this point, however, must be allowed its place and weight — namely, that medical science was hardly known in the Palestine of the time of Christ. With the possible exception of Luke, the Evangelists were not versed in the nature of the diseases whose cure they narrated.

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[92] *New Life of Jesus* (Eng. tr., 1865), Vol. I, p. 365.

[93] Article, *Gospels*, in *Ency. Bib.*

We cannot therefore regard the Gospel accounts of human ills as scientific diagnoses, such as modern medical practitioners would give; and this must be remembered both by those who approach them along psycho-therapeutic lines and by those who reject such a method of approach.

It is this fact which makes a secure judgment on this question so difficult. A recent careful study of *Miracles and the New Psychology* arrives at the following carefully balanced conclusion: "The examination of data undertaken in this essay exhibits the fact that we cannot show with certainty that any given case in the New Testament has its parallel in the annals of modern healing by psycho-therapy. . . . On the other hand the particulars of the miracles of healing upon which most reliance can be placed are not themselves incompatible with the view that such healing was accomplished through the agency of ascertainable psychological laws." [94]

This, it is to be noted, is a judgment based on a study of the "evidence." If, however, we are right in challenging the assertion that scientific inexplicability can be declared as belonging to a certain class of discernible events, is it not permissible to go further than this tentative judgment takes us, and to suggest that a view which is not "incompatible" with the evidence, critically considered, may be regarded as definitely compatible? At any rate this may be done, in accord with the scientific principle that a theory which is not incompatible with the known facts may be treated as a working hypothesis until, or unless, further investigations lead either to its emendation or to its disproof.

The belief that the "healing miracles" of the Gospels are to be regarded from this point of view is, in any case, becoming more and more marked in contemporary thought. Our British thought moves here, as in other directions, cautiously and therefore slowly. But hints and asides can be noted in different quarters, which, like straws on the river, reveal the direction of the flow. Light upon the Gospel "miraculous" data is being looked for from the further advances of psychological investigation.[95] Many are feeling that we have to sift the wheat from the chaff in past works which were rejective of Gospel "miracles," works which at one time were hastily and "instinctively" discredited. We may, for example, reject Strauss' standpoint to the Gospel miracles and yet feel something akin to approval with regard to such a comment of his as that to which we have alluded — "He could not have expressed himself more truly, more modestly, more correctly, more precisely." The beneficent activities of our Lord, it is felt, need not be regarded as wrought in other fashion than those of modern psychical science. These "miracles" were not performed, many are confident in maintaining, "in despite of all natural laws, but rather through a perfect accord with the laws of the psychology which we are now beginning to understand and which at the time were totally unknown, though they were none the less operative for that."[96]

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[94] *Miracles and the New Psychology*, E. R. Micklem, p. 130.

[95] See Moffatt in *Expository Times*, December, 1919, p. 136; also in *The Approach to the New Testament*, p. 175. See also *Contentio Veritatis*, 1907, p. 56, where Dr.

And this growing belief is itself a symptom of the position towards which thought is moving, as we think inevitably, that Christ's "miracles" are not to be regarded as scientifically inexplicable.

(2) We sought further to maintain the view that the miraculous concept should not be interpreted by the idea of evidential intervention of omnipotent power. That standpoint we believe to be implicit in the Gospel records.

It is not possible, we believe, to deny with any cogency the contention frequently made that the general Bible notion of miracle is different from the traditional one. It seems idle to maintain that to the biblical writers the "miracles" which they narrate were conceived to be merely astonishing and extraordinary events. A fair reading of the "miracle" narratives seems clearly to indicate that these writers regarded "miracles" in the tradi-

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Rashdall said: "I have myself a strong conviction that the result of 'psychical research' has already to some extent brought, and may hereafter be to a still greater extent able to bring, recorded events which rationalistic criticism has commonly dismissed as impossible within the limits of what may be regarded as possible without any further violation of the laws of Nature than is implied in the normal action of the human will." He goes on, however, to add: "But there is no probability that it will ever reverse the verdict which historical criticism and the study of comparative religion have passed on some other events recorded in the Old and New Testaments."

[96] *Some Aspects of the Life of Jesus*, Berguer, p. 207.

tional sense as events contrary to the usual course of things and due to specific supernatural intervention. But we are not justified, as we believe, in concluding from this admission that the Gospel concept of the miraculous is *exhausted* by that traditional idea. There is, we contend, an adumbration in the Gospels themselves of a concept of the miraculous which is in harmony with the claims of science and of the teachings of modern religious philosophy. Those who contend that our Lord Himself held the traditional idea of miracle, so difficult of acceptance today, overlook the immeasurable advance which is represented by His knowledge of God over that of the Old Testament. The sweeping assertion of Ménégoz requires considerable modification in the light of the Gospel revelation. He held: "*La notion biblique (du miracle) ne diffère en rien de notre notion courante, de la notion populaire et traditionelle, qui voit dans le miracle une violation des lois de la nature. . . . Le miracle est toujours considéré comme une intervention surnaturelle de Dieu dans l'ordre naturel des choses.*" [97] And Ménégoz maintains, while himself repudiating that concept, that Christ held it. "*Cette conception des écrivains de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament à aussi été celle de Jésus-Christ.*" [98] This, however, is to forget those strands of teaching represented by such sayings as, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." While it is not necessary to deny that Christ inherited some kind of dualistic differentiation of natural and supernatural, at the same time His own profound religious experience transcended that dualism. God was *ever* immediately at work. All natural things were to Him supernatural. Nature was to Him a "whispering gallery of spiritual truths." God to Him was always "intervening," but those "interventions" were not discoverable to the scientific mind, but to the awakened spiritual consciousness. In the profound spiritual experience of our Lord there was implicit the true notion of the miraculous as revelation.

Further, the unique feature of the mighty works of the Gospels is that they are, as we saw, with a few exceptions, acts which are in perfect harmony with the whole character of Jesus there revealed. This has bearing not only upon the historical question as to whether these events happened. More important still it gives us the clue to a right *idea* of the miraculous. The miraculous is a "sign." There are indications in the Gospels to suggest that the concept of the miraculous should not be construed through the idea of power, compelling the wonder of men, but through that of revelation. Only on one occasion is τέρας (wonder) found in the Synoptic Gospels, and there in a depreciatory sense. It is the eschatological reference to the "false Christs and false prophets" who "shall shew signs and wonders" (Mark, 13 : 22 and parallel passage, Matthew, 24 : 24). On no occasion in the Gospels is τέρας used in reference to any act of Christ.

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[97] *La Notion Biblique du Miracle*, Eugène Ménégoz (Paris, 1894), p. 11.
[98] *Op. cit.*, p. 11.

But since there may be misunderstanding as to the use of this word "sign," we are compelled to go on to ask: the "miraculous" is a "sign" — of what? For the word *sign* is itself pregnant with ambiguity, and should only be used when a clear view as to what is "signified" is set forth. This ambiguity may be noted by the Gospel use of the term σημεῖα. In the Marcan narrative the word is only used in a hostile sense (excluding the two uses of the term in the non-Marcan ending, Mark, 16 : 17 and 20). In the fourth Gospel, on the other hand, σημεῖον is the word used to designate the wonderful acts there recorded as wrought by Christ. Apart from the question of the historicity or otherwise of these "miracles" recorded by the fourth Evangelist, we cannot but note a changed emphasis in the use of the term σημεῖον. For to him "signs" were whatever "manifested His glory," those acts which revealed His Nature. While, therefore, the fourth Evangelist gives us a record of "miracles" which are less historically credible than the synoptists, he adumbrates for us a truer miraculous notion than they. This is indeed a somewhat paradoxical situation, and yet one not altogether unexpected when we have noted that he was more spiritual philosopher than exact historian, and that they were philosophic only in a naïve, unconscious way. To the fourth Evangelist we go for a true concept of the miraculous — the miraculous is a "sign." But to the synoptists rather than to him do we go for the historical events which "signify" the truths revealed.[99]

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[99] On John's use of σημεῖον see the striking and somewhat enigmatic utterance of Christ: "Ye seek me not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves

Of what, then, is the miraculous in the Gospels a "sign." Is it a sign of omnipotent power? There is little in the Gospels to substantiate such a view; indeed there is that in the personality of Jesus there revealed which makes such a view impossible. For let us consider what is involved in supposing that Jesus possessed, or had access to, omnipotent power which could be utilized at will. What of the thousands whom, it must be presumed, He did not heal? What of the fishermen whose nets, it must be presumed, He did not "supernaturally" fill? What of the thousands of mourners, it must be presumed, whose dead He did not raise?[100] Is it a view at all compatible either with the perfect personality revealed to us in the Gospels or with our own deepest religious instincts, that Jesus had the power to do all things, and yet utilized it only in a few cases? What kind of arbitrary and unfeeling demi-God does not this view involve? If this notion were the true one, then indeed many in our day would have to say, and in a deeper sense than Mary, "They have taken away the Lord."

Many past apologetics, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, signally failed to appreciate the moral difficulty involved in the very notion of Christ's "miracles" which they defended. Christ, they held, if divine, must have been able to perform whatever miracles He willed. What His humanity was unable of itself to achieve was possible for Him by what a Roman Catholic writer has called "the ever-ready concurrence of His divinity." Hence, "He was able of His free will to work them as often as He judged it expedient."[101] Such theories had as their determining idea a rigid dualistic view of humanity and divinity in Christ — an idea which we shall consider at greater length in our final chapter on "The Person of Christ and Miracle." Here, however,

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and were filled." Does not this remark involve that to Christ and the writer "signs" were not regarded simply as wonderful events in the natural world to compel belief in Him — but as manifestations of spiritual truth in Him and through Him? The people are said to have seen a "miracle," but it has not been to them a "sign." The content of the word *sign* is much deeper and truer than the content of the word *miracle*.

[100] Cf. Origen (*Contra Celsum*, Book II, 48). "There were many dead in the days of Jesus, but only those rose from the grave whom the Logos knew to be fitted for a resurrection."

[101] The *Catholic Ency.*, Vol. 10, p. 351.

they are referred to that we may set forth the moral difficulties inherent in the notion of Gospel "miracles" which they defend. The Jesus of the Gospels, whatever else He is, cannot be regarded as a being who had access to omnipotent power whenever He chose to employ it.

The *moral* difficulty inherent in much traditionalist apologetic has been frequently recognized. The *moral concept* has been by many applied to accomplish the rejection of past theories of Christ's "supernatural" knowledge; though not always, it requires to be said, have those who utilized this *moral* contention seen their way to apply it to theories of Christ's "supernatural" power. Fairbairn, for example, speaking of the notion that Christ had access to omniscience, declared: "If He had such knowledge, how could He remain silent as He faced human ignorance and saw reason wearied with the burden of all its unintelligible mysteries? If men could believe that once there lived upon this earth One who had all the knowledge of God, yet declined to turn any part of it into science for man, would they not feel their faith in His goodness taxed beyond endurance?"[102] Dr. Mackintosh, also has excellently declared, arguing against those who feel it "revolutionary to hold that the normal limitations of knowledge in His age and country" must be predicated of Jesus, that "the question can be decided solely by loyalty to facts; and these, it is not too much to say, are peremptory." He goes on to maintain that "the conclusion is unavoidable that in secular affairs His knowledge was but the knowledge of His time."[103] The "peremptoriness" of the facts in this region can, we imagine, hardly any longer be repudiated.

It seems necessary, however, to apply the contention to the sphere of Christ's "power" as well as to the sphere of His "knowledge." If it be justifiable to argue with Dr. Mackintosh against those who do not acknowledge the "peremptoriness" of the facts that "omniscience is, after all, the only possible alternative to a knowledge qualified by limitation" (an argument whose justification I myself entirely acknowledge) is it not just as justifiable to maintain that in regard to the concept held to explain the "miracles" we have the same type of alternative — either "omnipotence" or a power qualified by human limitation? It does not seem possible to doubt that there is no alternative between the spurious "fundamentalism" which declares that Christ's "miracles" were due to the utilization by Him of omnipotent power, and the "modernism" which declares that the "miracles" He really performed were as "explicable" on the human plan as the "supernormal discernment" or "preternatural knowledge" which Dr. Mackintosh recognizes "may be more or less paralleled from the life of Isaiah, Jeremiah, or St. Paul," and, we may add, from the life of non-Christian prophets such as the Buddha.

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[102] *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology* (2nd ed., 1893), p. 353.

[103] *The Person of Jesus Christ* (1920 ed.), p. 397.

The apologetic which declines to construe Christ's knowledge through the notion of omniscience must also, as it seems to us, decline to construe His works through the notion of omnipotence. We have sufficient spiritual faith to believe that the next generation will look back and marvel just as much at a generation which regarded the idea of an omnipotent power accessible to Christ as an *essential* of "the faith," as our own generation looks back and marvels at a generation which regarded an omniscient intellectual equipment on the part of Christ as an *essential*.

The fourth Gospel twice records an utterance of Christ which is in harmonious accord with His spirit, and which adumbrates a true concept of the miraculous. "The works which the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works which I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me" (John, 5 : 36, cf. also John, 10 : 25). Christ's works revealed Himself. They are the expression of His whole personality. They reveal in a very vivid way the Nature of Him who was incarnate love. They were not wrought on His own behalf. Is not the deepest significance of the "temptation" found here, that it reveals Christ as one whose whole Nature repudiated a display of thaumaturgy on His own behalf? As one who withdrew instinctively from a pandering to the portent-loving world? If by any conceivable possibility He had turned stones into bread would that have been "miraculous"? Not as we are able to understand the term — an understanding based, as we hold, on the fundamental truths revealed in the New Testament. By that very act we should have lost our Christ. We might have been non-plussed by such an act, but could nevermore have worshipped Him as divine, as the New Testament, at least, manifests to us the divine. On the cross they said of Him: "He saved others, Himself He cannot save." Surely no utterance could more correctly, even if unconsciously, have described the true significance of the miraculous. What He did not, as well as what He did, do reveals to us Himself. It is not as a revelation of power that "miracle," properly understood, becomes such. It is a manifestation of the Nature of God which Christ so perfectly reveals in selfless, sacrificial love.

It is therefore difficult, if not indeed impossible, to reconcile the past emphasis on "intervention of supernatural power" as the essential notion of the miraculous, with the Gospel portrait of Christ, and the Gospel record of His deeds. It is strange to find so primary a place in former apologetic given to a notion which to our Lord Himself is so alien and so undivine. One cannot but feel that some of us even today are in like condemnation with those who were forever "seeking a sign" from the Lord.

It is this mistaken idea of the miraculous which without doubt determined the attitude of many past " anti-miraculous " writers of the life of Christ. For this reason we cannot regard their works without a measure of sympathy. Their elimination of "miracles" from the Gospels may be regarded as their way of protesting against a crude and mistaken conception of the supernatural. We see today that this, as we regard it, false notion of the miraculous which they had inherited vitiated in some degree their history. Such lives of Christ, however, remain as monuments of the almost inevitable protests which arise within the soul of man against gross supernatural views. And they will serve a good purpose, in spite of their unhistorical character, if they make us seek a conception of "miracle" more in accord with the teaching and spirit of Christ.

He who in Himself revealed that the final truth about God was that He is holy love, had little sympathy with the idea that the final truth about Him was that He is omnipotence. If there is any justification for speaking of Christ's "miracles" as being "evidential," it is only in the sense that they reveal the divine nature, which ever seeks in sacrificial love the redemption of humanity. They cannot be used as "proofs" that omnipotent power was at His command. They are expressions of those moral and spiritual attributes — love, sympathy, truth, holiness, — which were so perfectly incarnated in Him, who was indeed "the effulgence of God's glory, the express image of His substance."

The philosopher's conclusion therefore that "the theistic universe is fundamentally ethical,"[104] is substantiated by the revelation which has come to humanity in the person of Christ and in the works that He wrought. What is written in our hearts is proclaimed in time by Him who came out of eternity to reveal to us the Father. The "miracle" of His acts is not that they were interpositions of omnipotent power, but that they were manifestations of omnipotent love. It is because most of them are such that we cannot regard them as "stumbling-blocks" to be extirpated wholesale from the Gospels. While the attitude of those who regard miracles as "proofs" of the truth as it is in Jesus is to be, and must be, increasingly repudiated, so also is that of those who regard the Gospel "miracles" as obstacles to the recognition of that truth. These latter seem to feel with Rousseau that if we can only get rid of the "miracles," the whole world will fall at the feet of Jesus. If we regard the Gospels more closely, however, we shall see that most of these "miracles" are not "stumbling blocks" that keep men from Him, but steps that lead men to Him. And of the few which cannot, whether in whole or in part, be accepted as historical, these have only in the past constituted a barrier to the person of Jesus to those who regarded them as inseparably one with that interventionist manifestation-of-omnipotence notion which their moral concepts forbade them to accept.

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[104] *Moral Values and the Idea of God,* Sorley, p. 466.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER VI

A NOTE ON THE QUESTION OF "MIRACULOUS EXAGGERATION" IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

In order to make more specific the general position maintained in the foregoing chapter it seems desirable that a further note should be added on the question of the "miraculous exaggeration" in the Synoptic Gospels. We leave out any reference to the fourth Gospel, owing to the uncertainty still prevailing as to its authorship and precise historical worth.

The time seems ripe for a more exhaustive historical investigation of this question than is either possible within the limits of a note or called for by the purpose and scope of this treatise. Confused and contradictory utterances are rife upon this question. The following two utterances, each of which is a "conclusion" resulting from an "impartial examination of the evidence," will serve as well as a paragraph to set forth this confusion. "We conclude," says Mr. J. M. Thompson, "that Q, which alone rivals P as an early and good authority, contains no evidence for miracles."[105] Speaking also of Q, Dr. (now Bishop) A. C. Headlam wrote: "It is difficult in fact to find any evidence stronger or more remarkable than this source gives."[106] Neither of these contradictory conclusions can be regarded as satisfactory from the historical point of view. In regard to the first of these utterances we have to ask what the writer means by 'miracles' and what he means by 'evidence.' These two words, *miracles* and *evidence*, require examination. The first writer is obviously using the word *miracles* here in the old sense as events caused by supernatural intervention, not explainable by law. Now it is true that Q does not contain much matter of this kind. At the same time remarkable "healings" are found in Q. Also, Q has reference to events which might just as well be construed as referring to events regarded as "miracles" in the old sense, as to remarkable events regarded as explicable by law. For example, the reply of Christ to John the Baptist, a Q narrative (Matthew, 11 : 2–6; Luke, 7 : 18–23), contains the assertion: "The dead are raised up." Now it is impossible to believe that Q when he said "dead" did not mean "dead." And if they were really dead (a point that may on other grounds be questioned), these can hardly be regarded as other than "miracles" in the old sense. Therefore, the conclusion seems to follow that Q *contains* "miracles." But is *containing* equal to *evidence?* That is the question. One critic will say No, another will say Yes, to that question. Thompson, for example, substantiates his contention by maintaining that "Q's list has been modified to suit the actual works of healing recorded of Jesus." The conservative critic will doubtless reply that the proofs of this *modification* are entirely subjective, and are not "evidence." It is imperative that these confusions be clarified. When we use such a word as "evidence," we must state exactly what we mean by it.

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[105] *Miracles in the New Testament*, p. 58.

[106] *The Miracles of the New Testament*, p. 190.

Are we left, then, and this is the question that continually thrusts itself upon the impartial historical critic, with nothing but an attitude of historical despair? Granted our opposing presuppositions, must they be forever irreconcilable? We dare not think so. We have sufficient faith in the method and spirit of historical criticism to refuse to believe that these confusions and contradictions *must* continue. While continuing to maintain that in regard to certain "miracles" in the Gospels historical criticism can only reach a conclusion one way or other by the use of a presupposition as to what is possible and what impossible, there are yet Gospel narratives in regard to which the historical method *by itself* is competent to give a verdict, which if not completely decisive is as nearly so as it is possible for such historical studies to achieve. And if the qualification suggested seems to some readers indicative of "historical despair," we must leave it at that.

Certain well-established results of critical inquiry already referred to must here be taken for granted, and chiefly that Mark's Gospel is prior to the first and the third, and that the writers of these latter gospels had the former before them when they wrote.

This is a point of the utmost importance for our question and merits reiteration. For if in the comparison of three narratives of the same event it is found that, for example, Matthew's and Luke's accounts differ, either the one from the other, or both of them together from Mark, it is open to the historical critic to suggest a *motive* on the part of their authors that may account for the nature of these differences.

(I) Let us begin by setting forth some omissions and alterations by the first and third Evangelists of statements in Mark which attribute to Jesus human emotions and inabilities, or which might *seem* to be lacking in due regard for Christ's person. We give them in the order of Mark's narrative and not in the order of their significance or importance.[107]

Mark, 1 : 12. "The spirit driveth him forth" (ἐκβάλλει). Matthew (4 : 1) and Luke (4 : 1) expressed this by the "less forceful" (Hawkins, *op. cit.*, p. 119) verbs ἀνήχθη and ἤγετο respectively ("was led").[108]

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[107] I here must acknowledge my indebtedness to W. C. Allen (*St. Matthew International Critical Commen.*, pp. xxxi ff.) and to Sir J. C. Hawkins (*Horae Synopticae*, 2nd ed., pp. 117 ff.) in the compilation of this list.

The recently published *Jesus by an eye-witness*, by H. D. A. Major (1925) came into my hands too late for use in the writing of this note. I should like, however, to refer to it here because of its general substantiation of the judgments to which my own study of the Gospel miracle narratives has led me. Speaking of Matthew and Luke he says: "We observe in them the tendency, not exhibited absurdly or recklessly, but by cautious omissions and additions, by judicious emendations and transpositions, to heighten the effect of the miraculous and to reduce the apologetic difficulties presented by the Marcan source which they are using" (*op. cit.*, p. 53).

Reference may also be made to various salient passages in *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins*, by B. H. Streeter (1924), which likewise came too late into my hands for use here. Speaking of Luke, he says (*op. cit.*, p. 220), that one of his "weak points" was "his preferring the more to the less miraculous of the two versions of a story laid before him."

With the important historico-critical surmise of Streeter of a "Proto-Luke" and of "A four document hypothesis," I do not feel here called upon to deal, as even if historically sound it in no way affects the trend of the discussion. For an examination of this hypothesis as it appeared first in the *Hibbert Journal*, October, 1921, see Major (*op. cit.*, pp. 108 ff.). See also V. Taylor, *Behind the Third Gospel: a study of the Proto-Luke hypothesis* (1926). (For the first exposition of the hypothesis see *Hibbert Journal*, October, 1921, "Fresh Light on the Synoptic Problem," by B. H. Streeter.)

[108] Dr. Salmon, on the other hand, regarded Matthew's word, ἀνήχθη, as the original word used by Q, and that Mark, who, he believed, had Q before him, pur-

Mark, 1 : 41. "Being moved with compassion" (σπλαγχνισθεὶς) (D a f f^{2} have ὀργισθεὶς "being angry"). Matthew (8 : 3) and Luke (5 : 13) omit this reference to human emotion.

Mark, 1 : 45. "Insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into a city" — this possible suggestion of inability is omitted by Matthew and Luke in their parallel passages.

Mark, 2 : 26. "When Abiathar was High Priest." The omission of this by Matthew (12 : 4) and Luke (6 : 4) was doubtless occasioned by the historical difficulty.

Mark, 3 : 5. "When he had looked round about with anger, being grieved etc." Matthew (12 : 13) omits all this; Luke (6 : 10) keeps the περιβλεψάμενος but omits the reference to Christ's anger.

Mark, 3 : 21. "They said, He is beside Himself." This is omitted by both Matthew and Luke.

Mark, 5 : 9. Christ's question here, "What is thy name?" is omitted by Matthew though inserted by Luke (8 : 30).

Mark, 5 : 30. Christ's question here, "Who touched my clothes?" is omitted by Matthew though inserted in substance by Luke (8 : 45).

Mark, 6 : 3. ὁ τέκτων becomes in Matthew ὁ τοῦ τέκτονος υἱός (13 : 55).

Mark, 6 : 5. "He could (ἐδύνατο) there do no mighty work etc." Matthew's significant alteration here is, "He did not (οὐκ ἐποίησεν) many mighty works there." (13 : 58.) This passage is not found in Luke.

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posely altered it to ἐκβάλλει. "It seems to me," he wrote, "that St. Mark here purposely altered the language of Q, which St. Matthew has preserved, but which was liable to be misinterpreted. These words (Matthew's Ἰησοῦς ἀνήχθη εἰς τὴν ἔρημον κ.τ.λ.) might be misunderstood as describing a bodily transference through the air; and it is likely that such an interpretation actually was given them since Origen (*Comm. in Johan*, tom. II, 6) repeats, as from the Hebrew Gospel, a statement that the Holy Ghost had taken Jesus by one of His hairs and carried Him to the great mountain Tabor. This interpretation was suggested by Ezekiel, 8 : 3, and by a story in *Bel and the Dragon* of a like transporting of the prophet Habakkuk, to bring food to Daniel in the lions' den. We can understand then why St. Mark altered the language, so as to exclude the idea of a mechanical removal, independent of the will of the subject of the miracle; and instead to represent that Jesus was so filled with the Holy Spirit that His human organs, not independently of His will, but by His will, became instruments to obey the Spirit's motions" (*Human Element in the Gospels*, p. 60).

Mark, 6 : 6. "He marvelled because of their unbelief." Matthew omits "he marvelled" (13 : 58). (Cf., however, Matthew, 8 : 10, and Luke, 7 : 9. In this Q narrative both Matthew and Luke tell us that Jesus "marvelled.")

Mark, 6 : 38. Christ's question, "How many loaves have ye?" is omitted by both Matthew and Luke.

Mark, 6 : 48. "He would have (*ἤθελεν*) passed by them." Omitted by Matthew (14 : 26). Luke does not narrate this incident of the walking on the sea. Matthew's omission *might* have been caused by his fear that Mark's account would suggest either that Christ was not aware of the proximity of the disciples or that he did not purpose to aid them.

Mark, 7 : 9. "Full well do ye reject the commandment of God." Matthew (15 : 3) alters this ironical utterance to the more colourless question "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God, etc.?" This passage is not in Luke.

Mark, 7 : 24. "He entered into a house, and would have no man know it: and He could not be hid." Matthew omits (15 : 21 ff.). This incident of the healing of the daughter of a Syrophoenician woman is not in Luke.

Mark, 8 : 12. "He sighed deeply in His spirit and saith, 'Why does this generation seek a sign?'" Both the statement of Christ's emotion and his question are omitted by Matthew (16 : 2), who also inserts, "but the sign of Jonah" after "there shall no sign be given unto it." (Cf. later, on Matthew, 12 : 38–42; Luke, 11 : 29–32.) This passage is not in Luke.

Mark, 8 : 23. Christ's question here, "Seest thou ought?" is of course not found in Matthew or Luke who both omit this healing work.

Mark, 9 : 12. Christ's question, "How is it written of the Son of man, that he should suffer many things and be set at nought?" is omitted by Matthew (17 : 11). The passage is not in Luke.

Mark, 9 : 16. Christ's question, "What question ye with them?" is omitted by Matthew (17 : 14) and Luke (9 : 37).

Mark, 9 : 21. Christ's question, "How long time is it since this hath come unto him?" is omitted by Matthew (17 : 17 f.) and Luke (9 : 42 f.) in their narrative of the incident.

Mark, 9 : 30. "He would not that any man should know it." Only in Mark.

Mark, 9 : 33. Christ's question, "What were ye reasoning in the way?" is omitted by Matthew (18 : 1) and Luke (9 : 46).

Mark, 10 : 3. Christ's question, "What did Moses command you?" is omitted by Matthew. Passage not in Luke.

Mark, 10 : 14. "He was moved with indignation." Omitted by Matthew (19 : 14) and Luke (18 : 16).

Mark, 10 : 17–18. For "Good Master" and "Why callest thou me good?" Matthew (19 : 16–17) has "Master" and "Why askest thou me concerning that which is good?" Luke, however, follows Mark.

Mark, 10 : 21. "Jesus looking upon him loved him" — a beautiful touch omitted by Matthew (19 : 21) and Luke (18 : 22). No modern narrator of the life of Christ *could possibly* omit this passage if he had it before him.

Mark, 11 : 3. "Straightway He (*i.e.*, Jesus) will send him back hither." Matthew (21 : 3) has "straightway he (*i.e.*, the owner) will send them." The words recorded here by Mark seem to be a promise to the owner of the colt of its speedy return; the words recorded by Matthew predict the speedy granting by the owner of the disciples' request. The difference is suggestive, and it is open to us to conclude that Matthew's reason for altering Mark's account was that the latter, in telling us that Christ was only asking for a very brief loan of the colt, *dims* the miraculous colouring of the incident. Luke (19 : 31) omits the clause altogether.

Mark, 11 : 13. "If haply He might find anything thereon." This suggestion that Christ *expected* figs when there were none (implying His limitation of knowledge) is omitted by Matthew (21 : 19). "For it was not the season of figs." This is also omitted by Matthew. Taken with the foregoing it might seem to imply an expectation of figs which the season rendered an ignorant or unjustifiable one. Luke omits the whole incident.

Mark, 12 : 32–33. "Of a truth, Master, thou hast well said that he is one etc." The patronizing suggestion contained in these words would tend to make many moderns as well as Matthew eliminate them. The passage is not in Luke.

Mark, 13 : 32. "But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." "Neither the Son" must be regarded as having been omitted by Matthew (24 : 36). It is not found in S^1 $\aleph^{ca}$ E F g^{12} *al.*; Moffatt's translation omits. Westcott and Hort include, however. Luke omits the passage.

Mark, 14 : 1. (and Luke, 22 : 1) may be compared with Matthew, 26 *: 1.* Mark says, "After two days was the feast of the Passover etc." Matthew has it that Jesus "said unto His disciples, Ye know that after two days the passover cometh, and *the Son of man is delivered up to be crucified.*" Neither Mark nor Luke gives us this specific prediction by Christ of His crucifixion in two days. (Cf., however, Matthew, 16 : 21–22; Mark, 8 : 31; Luke, 9 : 22; Matthew, 20 : 18–29; Mark, 10 : 33–34; Luke, 18 : 31–33.)

The increasing use of Κύριε. In addition to these instances, the increasing use of Κύριε as a title by which Jesus was addressed in the Gospels, to which Sir J. C. Hawkins drew attention,[109] should be noted. The following table indicates the Synoptists' use of the respective modes of address:

	Matthew	Mark	Luke
διδάσλαλε	6	10	11
Κύριε	19	1	16

The *fact* of these differences being clearly established, the only question that remains is as to the interpretation to be placed upon them. Do these omissions and alterations justify us in concluding that Matthew, and perhaps to a lesser extent Luke, were *motived* (whether consciously or unconsciously does not really matter) by "an increasing reverence for the Person of Christ"? Some have firmly denied this motivation theory. Headlam, for example, in *Miracles of the New Testament* (p. 214) did *not* agree that "out of motives of reverence words are omitted that ascribed to our Lord human emotions; and, in particular, questions which might seem to imply ignorance." He held that the instances were "not very conclusive." On the other hand, and while acknowledging the subjectivity of the judgment, we cannot but feel that these alterations and omissions are *cumula-*

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[109] See *op. cit.*, p. 212.

tively suggestive as to "motive." In regard to some of these instances, taken separately, they carry little weight. But taking them together, they represent a fairly stable weight of suggestiveness. "It is evident," says Allen, "that contemplation of the life of the Lord, and reflection upon His Person and work, and all that it meant for human life; and the deepening reverence that springs spontaneously from the life of meditation upon His words, and from spiritual communion with Him, and from worship of God in His name, was gradually leading Christian writers partly to refine and purify, partly to make careful choice of the language in which they described His life. . . . In this respect the Synoptic Gospels present in miniature the same process that afterwards took place on a larger scale in the history of the Creeds. Already the Gospel writers found themselves committed to the task of describing the life of One whom they knew to have been a truly human Person, whom yet they believed to have been an incarnation of the Eternal. This task . . . was increased by the fact that the books to be written were intended . . . for the average member of the Christian congregation, simple-minded and matter-of-fact, to whom the narrative of the Lord's life with its double-sidedness would repeatedly suggest hard questions, until use and custom blunted their edge. How could the Lord, if He was divine, ask for information? How could He wish or will things that did not happen? How could it be said that He could not do this or that? . . . The first and third Gospels prove themselves to be later than the second by the consideration which they show for the simple-minded reader in questions like these."[110] As to whether it is a case of Matthew and Luke "showing consideration" for their readers, or whether it is not rather a case of their obeying tendencies in their own minds irrespective of the effect that their narratives might have upon their readers, may be debated. In either case, however, "motivation" is manifested in their Gospels.

(II) We pass from these instances, which have a considerable *general* bearing on the subject, to note changes from Mark's early account in regard to specific "miracle" narratives.

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[110] *Op. cit.*, p. xxxviii.

The Baptism of Jesus. Mark, 1 : 9–11; Matthew, 3 : 13–17; Luke, 3 : 22. In regard to the opening of the heavens and the descent of the dove, it has to be noted that Mark records these as *seen by Christ* (1 : 10); Matthew relates the opening of the heavens as a historical narrative ("*Lo*, the heavens were opened" — omit with W. H. "unto Him"), but relates the descent of the Holy Spirit as *seen* by Christ. Luke relates both the opening of the heavens and the descent of the Holy Spirit as a historical narrative, and in regard to the latter he inserts "in a bodily form" — "descended in a bodily form as a dove." Accepting Mark's account as of greatest historical validity, is it not to be regarded as a naïvely vivid way of setting forth what the Lord had told them about His experiences on this occasion? A consciousness of special divine in-filling at this time — would it not be natural to express it by the use of so familiar a figure as that of the *dove?* (Cf. article on "dove" in *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*. Philo described wisdom as a dove. Cf. *Critical Commentary on Matthew* by W. C. Allen, p. 29.)

Regarding the *voice* from the heavens, Mark (1 : 11) and Luke (3 : 22) say, "*Thou art* my beloved Son, etc."; Matthew (3 : 17) says, "*This is* my beloved Son, etc." May we conclude that Mark's (and Luke's) is the more dependable account, and that they are recounting an experience that *came to Jesus* at that moment, which experience He afterwards communicated to them? It is not, if this explanation be accepted, therefore necessary to conceive that a physically audible voice was heard, just as it is not necessary to conceive that a physically audible voice was heard by Moses where it is narrated that "the Lord spake unto Moses face to face." In the case of our Lord's Baptism is it not sufficient to believe that the vividness and immediateness of the divine call then experienced by Him was naturally, and almost inevitably, expressed as the utterance of "a voice"? Many instances of the hearing of a voice, expressive of vivid religious experiences, might be adduced from all religious literatures.

Matthew's account here therefore may possibly be regarded as indicative of his desire to record the voice as not merely heard by Christ, but as a kind of public proclamation heard by others who were present. But whether that was Matthew's motive or no, and it must be confessed that this is a conclusion highly subjective, the kind of explanation adopted above is to be maintained.

THE SICK WHO WERE HEALED BY CHRIST. Mark, 1 : 32–34. "They brought unto Him *all* that were sick. . . . And He healed *many* that were sick." With this compare Matthew's version (8 : 16): "They brought unto Him many possessed with devils and He cast out the spirits with a word and healed *all* that were sick"; also Luke's version (4 : 40): "All they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto Him; and He laid His hands *on every one of them*, and healed them." A similar change from *many* to *all* is to be noted in Matthew, 12 : 15, as compared with Mark, 3 : 10 (cf. also Luke, 6 : 19). If Christ only healed "many" of the sick who were brought to him, is there not support in the historical criticism of the Gospels for the view that Christ's healings were in accord with psychological laws frequently, and in all ages, adumbrated?

THE STILLING OF THE STORM. Mark, 4 : 36. In the stilling of the storm incident Mark's statement that "other boats were with Him," is omitted by Matthew and Luke, a *possible* "miracle-exaggeration" reason for this omission being that it might be wondered how these boats fared in the storm — whether, for example, they also had experienced a "miraculous" stilling of the tempest. This suggestion, however, has little objective stability about it, the *main* point being that Mark himself records the pacification of the storm. Methods other than the critical investigation of sources are necessary for reaching a conclusion as to this incident.

THE RAISING OF JAIRUS' DAUGHTER. Mark, 5 : 22–24, 35–43; Matthew 9 : 18–19, 23–25; Luke, 8 : 41–42, 49–56. Pfleiderer saw in the narratives of this incident "the much more pronounced supernaturalism of Matthew's narrative" — a thesis which he thus elucidated. "In the case of the Jairus story, how natural is its progress in Mark compared with the manifold improbabilities in Matthew! According to the latter, Jesus was from the first entreated to raise one who was dead; in the former, on the contrary, only to come to the aid of one who was grievously ill, news of whose death first meets Him as He is on the way. But that she was really dead when Jesus came and raised her up, Mark nowhere says. The reserve of his narrative leaves the possibility quite open that the child was only seemingly dead, and at the touch of Jesus was strengthened and rose up (ἀνέστη); whereas the two other Synoptists speak unambiguously of an actual raising of the dead, and in so doing show that their representation is a clumsy retouching of the more delicate picture drawn by Mark."[111] The extreme subjectivity of this mode of elucidating the main thesis — namely, that the girl was not really dead — must be apparent to every careful student. We do not question that main thesis, but an unfortunate impression is frequently created by the mode of elucidation here manifested. The *main* question is — Does Mark's narrative indicate that he did not believe the girl was dead? Pfleiderer suggests an affirmative answer to this question by his statement that, "Mark nowhere says" that she was dead. But in point of *exact* fact neither do Matthew nor Luke *say* that she was dead. Each Evangelist records statements of others to the effect that the girl was dead; and I fail to see how one can utilize as an argument the fact that Mark does not say she was dead when he records (5 : 35) the statement of the messengers, "Thy daughter is dead." I could not myself use of this incident the phrase — "The reserve" of Mark's narrative.[112]

MATTHEW'S EMPHASIS ON THE IMMEDIACY OF A MIRACLE. A tendency has been noted in Matthew "to emphasise the immediacy of a miracle." Note the insertion by Matthew of "from that hour" in the healings narrated at Mark, 5 : 34 (parallel passages Matthew, 9 : 22 and Luke, 8 : 48),[113] Mark, 7 : 30 (parallel Matthew, 15 : 28), and Mark, 9 : 27 (parallels Matthew, 17 : 18 and Luke, 9 : 42). Another illustration of this tendency in Matthew may be noted in his account of the barren fig-tree — Mark, 11 : 12–14 (parallel Matthew, 21 : 18–19). Matthew tells us that upon Christ's denunciation "immediately the fig-tree withered away," where Mark's narrative places an interval of a day between Christ's words and the disciples' observation that the fig-tree was "withered away from the roots" (Mark, 11 : 20). We may, I think, see in this emphasis upon *immediacy* a desire to intensify the recognition of wonderfulness.

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[111] *Primitive Christianity*, Vol. II, p. 22.

[112] For a more careful elucidation of the story see Salmon's *Human Element in the Gospels*, pp. 281–87.

[113] We must note, however, the counterbalancing omission by Matthew of Mark's "And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up, etc." (Mark, 5 : 29).

THE MIRACLES OF FEEDING, AND THE WALKING ON THE WATER. *The Feedings*. Mark, 6 : 33–34 (parallels Matthew, 14 : 13–21 and Luke, 9 : 11–17) and Mark, 8 : 1–10 (parallel Matthew, 15 : 32–39). Matthew may be held to suggest an increase in the number of the people by his assertion "beside women and children" (Matthew, 14 : 21 and 15 : 38). This, however, is not important.

As having a possible bearing on the narratives of the feeding of the five thousand and the walking on the water, it is well to compare Mark, 6 : 51–52 with Matthew, 14 : 32–33. This comparison brings out the following facts: *First*, that Matthew inserts that the disciples were so impressed by the walking on the water and the ceasing of the wind that they said "Of a truth Thou art the Son of God"; *second*, that Matthew *omits* the Marcan statement that the disciples "were sore amazed in themselves; for they understood not concerning the loaves, but their heart was hardened." Mark's narrative seems to mean that the disciples were not impressed by the feeding (cf. also Mark, 8 : 11–21), a state of mind which many would regard as impossible if the event had taken place exactly as narrated.[114] Matthew, instead of suggesting that the disciples were not impressed by the feeding, states that they were *so* impressed by the walking on the water that they immediately worshipped Christ as the Son of God.

THE SENDING FORTH OF THE TWELVE. Mark, 6 : 7–11, Matthew, 10 : 1–14, and Luke, 9 : 1–5. In the accounts of the sending forth of the twelve where Mark tells us merely that Christ "gave them authority over the unclean spirits," Matthew tells us that he "gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal *all manner* of disease and *all manner* of sickness"; and *in addition* he records the following as words of Christ, "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils" (10:8). When this is paralleled with the instances already referred to in regard to Christ's own works of healing, there remains little doubt but that Matthew distinctly reveals what may be called "miracle-colouring" here. If the disciples only cured certain diseases (as suggested by Mark), it affords considerable support to the view we have set forth, that *all* these healing works have common psychological denominators.

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[114] Cf., *e.g.*, Professor Burkitt, who takes this position. He says, "The apostles had not been influenced by the events of these two meals, a circumstance which would be indeed incredible if these events had come to pass in the way generally supposed" (*The Gospel History and Its Transmission* (3rd ed.), p. 73).

MIRACLE "DOUBLETS" IN MATTHEW. Sir John Hawkins has suggested the presence of miracle "doublets" in Matthew.[115] Note the twofold summary of the ministrations of Jesus — Matthew, 4:23 and Matthew, 9:35. In regard to the two healings recorded at Matthew, 9:27–32, Hawkins says that the difficulties are "very serious"[116] and that they are so strikingly similar to those recorded later (Matthew, 20:29–34 and 12:22–24, respectively) "that the suggestion naturally occurs that Matthew inserted this anticipatory mention of them in order to make up the conventional number of 'ten miracles.'"[117]

OMISSIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS OF MARCAN DETAILS. It may be suggested, to counterbalance these "miracle additions," that Matthew frequently abbreviates Mark's miracle narratives, the suggestion being put forward that he would not have done so if he were motived by "miraculous exaggeration" tendencies. Headlam in *Miracles of the New Testament* (p. 217) seems to use this as an argument against the miracle exaggeration thesis. In answer to this, it should be stated that an examination of these abbreviations of Mark by Matthew[118] does not reveal that they lessen the wonderfulness of the event recorded.[119] On the other hand, frequently these abbreviations, by the omission of "human characteristics of Christ," *heighten* rather than lessen the wonderfulness of the event. A close study of these abbreviations leads to the conclusion that its motive has no bearing on the "miraculous exaggeration" thesis. They are seen to be explained by Matthew's (and to a lesser degree Luke's) tendency "to omit or condense Mark's subsidiary and pleonastic details." [120]

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[115] Cf. *Horae Synopticae*, pp. 92 ff.

[116] *Op. cit.*, p. 93, footnote.

[117] *Op. cit.*, p. 167. Cf. also Hawkins in *Expository Times*, XII, p. 474, XIII, pp. 24 ff.

[118] See *Horae Synopticae*, pp. 158–60, 214–15; also Allen, *op. cit.*, pp. xvii ff., for an investigation of such abbreviations.

[119] The passage (Mark, 16:17–18) which contains such "miracle" promises to the disciples as that "they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them," is found in the spurious ending to the Gospel. I have noted, however, one case in which Matthew omits a "miracle" detail. If we compare the directions for preparing for the Last Supper in Matthew, 26:18–19,

In regard to omissions of "miracles," the following healing stories recorded by Mark are not found in Matthew or in Luke: Mark, 7 : 32–37 (healing of a deaf and dumb man), Mark, 8 : 22–26 (healing of a blind man). These omissions can hardly be used to disprove Matthew's (or Luke's) interest in recording miracles. For, in the first place, there is the difficult question as to whether Matthew and Luke used Mark as we now have it, *or* an original and shorter Mark (termed usually *Ur-Marcus*). And, in the second place, it has been noted that in these two "healings," *physical means* are employed in the cure: "He put his fingers into his ears, and spat, and touched his tongue" (Mark, 7 : 33); "He . . . spat on his eyes" (Mark, 8 : 23). "These two," it has significantly been pointed out, "are the only cases in the Synoptic Gospels in which any other means than laying on of hands is used by Jesus." [121] Further, in this latter incident the cure is *gradual*, requiring a twofold laying on of Christ's hands. In dealing with this latter incident, Dr. Salmon said that its "peculiarity . . . is its gradual performance by successive steps, to which we find nothing parallel in the rest of the Gospel history." [122] The emphasis on *means*, then, may be conceived as accounting for the omissions, in that they might seem to detract from the wonderfulness of the cures. In any case Matthew's reference (15 : 29–31) to "the dumb speaking" probably indicates his acquaintance with the "Ephphatha"

Mark, 14 : 13–15, Luke, 22 : 8–12, Matthew omits after "Go into the city" the specific prophecy of Christ, "and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him," etc.

[120] Hawkins adds to this explanation Matthew's desire to adapt the narratives for catechetical purposes (cf. pp. 160, 163, 214).

[121] Sir J. C. Hawkins in *Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem*, p. 67. Cf. also *St. Mark Internat. Crit. Com.*, Gould, p. 149.

[122] *Human Element in the Gospels*, p. 348.

(Matthew, 7 : 32 f.) healing. Further in Q there is an account of a dumb man (possibly the same: Matthew, 9 : 32, 12 : 22; and Luke, 11 : 14).

Matthew also omits the following incidents recorded both by Mark and Luke: healing of a demoniac (Mark, 1 : 23–28, Luke, 4 : 33–37) and the Independent Exorcist (Mark, 9 : 38–40, Luke, 9 : 49–50). In the first of these cases it *may be* significant that Mark records evidences of physical suffering after Christ's command — "the unclean spirit rent him, and cried with a loud voice" (cf. Luke's "having done him no hurt"). Similarly the complete omission by Matthew in his record of Mark, 9 : 20–26, of the vivid details of physical anguish of the demoniac during the healing process *may be* explicative of his omission.

(III) The endeavour of Matthew to set forth incidents in the Gospels as *a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy* has frequently and in all ages been noted. The question of "miracle" and the question of "prophecy" being closely allied questions, this "motive" of Matthew has direct bearing on the question of "miraculous colouring." The following passages where Matthew alters or adds to Mark's account should be noted:

1. *Triumphal Entry.* Matthew, 29 : 1–9; Mark, 11 : 1–10; Luke, 19 : 29–38. The citation from Zechariah 9 : 9, is inserted by Matthew (21 : 5, cf. John, 12 : 15). It is to be noted that Matthew refers to *two* animals, an *ass* and a *colt*, where Mark and Luke refer only to a *colt*. It is very difficult to resist the conclusion that Matthew here altered Mark's account in order to make it harmonious with Zechariah's prophecy.

2. *Cleansing of Temple.* Matthew, 21 : 12–13; Mark, 11 : 15–18; Luke, 19 : 45–48. In Matthew (and Luke) this follows immediately upon the triumphal entry. In Mark it takes place the following day. Matthew has here altered Mark's order of the two incidents — the barren fig tree and the cleansing of the temple — and if he had Mark before him, it is reasonable to suppose that he had a reason for so doing. That reason *may* be that he was thinking of Malachi's prophecy (Malachi, 3 : 1–3): "The Lord whom ye seek shall *suddenly* come to His temple etc.," and that his order seemed to him more consonant with Malachi's

"suddenly" than Mark's, which allowed a day to intervene between the entry into Jerusalem and the cleansing. (On this incident see Major, *op. cit.*, p. 90.)

3. *Betrayal Money of Judas.* Matthew, 26 : 14–16; Mark, 14 : 10–11; Luke, 22 : 3–6. Compare Matthew's insertion of *ἔστησαν αὐτῷ τριάκοντα ἀργύρια* with Zech. 11 : 12, and his quotation at 27 : 9–10. (Cf. Zech. 11 : 13.)

4. Compare Mark, 15 : 23: "Wine mingled with Myrrh" (*ἐσμυρνισμένον οἶνον*), with Matthew, 27 : 34: "Wine mingled with gall" (*οἶνον μετὰ χολῆς μεμιγμένον*) — a possible reference to Psalms, 69 : 21 (LXX has *και ἔδωκαν εἰς τὸ βρῶμά μου χωλήν*).

(IV) For the convenience of the reader it may be well to set forth also the following data:

(*a*) "Miracle" matter only in Matthew and Luke.
(*b*) "Miracle" matter peculiar to Matthew.
(*c*) "Miracle" matter peculiar to Luke.
(*d*) The "nature-miracles" in the Marcan tradition.

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(*a*) Narratives found in both Matthew and Luke but not in Mark:

Matt. 4 : 2–11; Luke, 4 : 2–13. Temptation narrative details.

Matt. 8 : 5–13; Luke, 7 : 1–10. Healing of the Centurion's servant.

Matt. 11 : 2–11; Luke, 7 : 18–28. Christ's answer to John the Baptist.

Matt. 12 : 22–23: Luke, 11 : 14. The healing of "one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb" (Matthew), "a devil which was dumb" (Luke).

It has to be noted that there are no "nature-miracles" peculiar to both Matthew and Luke (for a reference to "raising the dead" see prior reference in this note).

(*b*) Of greater significance to our question are the "miracle" narratives found only in Matthew:

Matt. 1 : 18–25. Angel testimony to the Virgin Birth.

Matt. 2 : 1–12. The Wise Men and the star.

Matt. 2 : 13–14, 19–20. Angelic appearances to Joseph.

Matt. 9 : 27–34. Healing of two blind men and a dumb demoniac.

Matt. 9 : 35–36. Description of Christ's ministry as "healing *all manner* of diseases etc."

Matt. 12 : 40. It is to be noted that in the two accounts (Matt. 12 : 38–42, and Luke, 11 : 29–32) we have of Christ's answer to those who sought a "sign" from him, Matthew *alone* has the specific prophecy that "as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." The usual interpretation of the "sign of Jonah" which Christ promises here is a "non-miraculous" one, namely, that "He should appear among men as a preacher of judgment sent from God even as Jonah by his preaching of judgment was a sign to the Ninevites."[123]

Matt. 14 : 28–31. Peter's effort to walk on the water. It is perhaps significant to compare Matthew's conclusion in this incident to Mark's. Where Mark tells us that the disciples were "sore amazed, in themselves; for they understood not concerning the loaves but their heart was hardened" (Mark, 6 : 51), Matthew says that they "worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God."

Matt. 17 : 24–27. The stater in the fish's mouth.

Matt. 19 : 28. Promise of twelve thrones to the disciples "when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory." (Cf. Luke, 22 : 28–30.)

Matt. 21 : 14. An insertion in Mark's narrative: "And the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple and He healed them."

Matt. 26 : 53. In the narrative of the betrayal (cf. Mark, 14 and Luke, 22) Matthew alone records the following as words of Christ: "Thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and He shall even now send me more than twelve legions of angels?"

Matt. 27 : 51–53. The earthquake and the resurrection of the saints (the rending of the veil of the temple is recorded by all three synoptists). It is significant here to compare Mark, 15 : 39

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[123] Cf., *e.g.*, Wendt, *Teaching of Jesus* (Eng. tr., 1892), Vol. II, pp. 194–95.

with Matt. 27 : 54. Mark says, "When the Centurion which stood by over against him *saw that he so gave up the ghost*, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God"; Matthew says, "Now the Centurion and they that were with him watching Jesus, *when they saw the earthquake and the things that were done*, feared exceedingly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God."

Matt. 27 : 62–66. Sealing of the tomb.

Matt. 28 : 2–4. The earthquake and the opening of the tomb by angels.

Matt. 28 : 9. "They took hold of his feet etc."

It is to be noted that such difficult "miracles" as the stater in the fish's mouth and the resurrection of the saints at the crucifixion are recorded only by Matthew.

(*c*) The "miracle" matter found only in Luke. This may be divided into two sections:

(1) The first two chapters of Luke's Gospel, which are almost in entirety peculiar to him.

Luke, 1 : 5–25. Gabriel's appearance to Zacharias and the conception of Elizabeth when "advanced in years."

Luke, 2 : 8–20. Angels announcing the birth of Christ to shepherds.

Luke, 2 : 25–38. The testimony of Simeon and Anna.

(2) The rest of Luke's Gospel.

Luke, 5 : 1–11. "Miraculous draught of fishes."

Luke, 7 : 11–17. Raising the son of the widow of Nain.

Luke, 9 : 31. Moses and Elijah speaking of Christ's decease shortly to happen in Jerusalem. Mark (9 : 4) and Matthew (17 : 3) record simply that they "were talking with" Jesus.

Luke, 9 : 51–56. We insert this passage as having bearing on the possible "miracle-hunger" of the disciples. James and John had asked: "Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" To whom Luke tells us Christ replied with a rebuke — "But He turned and rebuked them."

Luke, 10 : 17–20. Return of 70. (There is, however, no *new* "miracle" here).

Luke, 10 : 10–13. Healing of woman with an 18 years' infirmity.

Luke, 14: 1–6. Healing of a dropsical man.

Luke, 17 : 11–19. Healing of ten lepers.

Luke, 19 : 39–44. Graphic prophetic details of destruction of Jerusalem.

Luke, 21 : 23b, 24, 28. Details regarding destruction of Jerusalem.

Luke, 22 : 43. "There appeared unto him an angel from heaven, strengthening him." Note verses 43 and 44 are omitted by A B א$^{\text{corr}1}$ N R T W etc., W. H.: also Dr. Moffatt in his new translation includes them in brackets.

Luke, 22 : 51. Healing of the ear of servant of High Priest.

Luke, 24 : 13–33. Details of appearance to two on road to Emmaus. (Cf. Mark, 16 : 12).

Luke, 24 : 38–43. The details (regarded by some as "materialistic" details) of this resurrection appearance are only recorded by Luke — "Handle me and see etc.," and Christ's eating "a piece of broiled fish." (Cf. Acts, 10 : 41.)

Luke, 24 : 51. (Cf. Acts, 1 : 9 f.) The Ascension. "He parted from them" ("and was carried up into Heaven," omitted by Dא^1 etc. Griesb., Tischdf. bracketed by W. H. also by Dr. Moffatt in his new trans.). The present ending to Mark's Gospel (16 : 9–20) contains this incident. Verse 19, "The Lord Jesus . . . was received up etc."

If the mode of dealing with the raising of the son of the widow of Nain, as suggested on pages 309 and 310, be accepted, it is thus to be noted that, with the exception of the "miraculous draught of fishes" (Luke, 5 : 1–11), the "miracle" acts performed by the pre-resurrection Christ in these narratives peculiar to Luke, are all works of healing.

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Comparing the above sections, we note also the important fact that with the twofold exception of (1) certain birth stories and (2) a few "miracles" recorded only by Matthew and recognized almost universally as impossible of historical acceptance, all the synoptic "Nature-miracles" wrought by the pre-resurrection Christ are found in the Marcan narrative.

(*d*) In concluding this note it will be well to note these "*Nature-miracles*" *of the Marcan narrative.*

1. Those *wrought by Christ.*

Stilling of Tempest — Matt. 8 : 23–37; Mark, 4 : 36–41; Luke, 8 : 22–35.

Raising of Jairus' daughter — Matt. 9 : 18–19, 23–25; Mark, 5 : 22–24, 35–43; Luke, 8 : 41–42, 49–56.

Feeding of 5000 — Matt. 14 : 15–21; Mark, 6 : 35–44; Luke, 9 : 12–17.

Walking on the Sea — Matt. 14 : 22–33; Mark, 6 : 45–52.

Feeding of 4000 — Matt. 15 : 32–39; Mark, 8 : 1–10.

Withering of Barren Fig-Tree. Matt. 21 : 18–19; Mark, 11 : 12–14, 20.

2. Events associated with the life of Christ.

Baptism of Jesus — Matt. 3 : 13–17; Mark, 1 : 9–11; Luke, 3 : 21–22.

Transfiguration — Matt. 17 : 1–8; Mark, 9 : 2–8; Luke, 9 : 28–36.

Darkness over the Land — Matt. 27 : 45; Mark, 15 : 33; Luke, 23 : 44.

Rending of Veil of Temple — Matt. 27 : 51; Mark, 15 : 38; Luke, 23 : 45.

3. *The Resurrection* — Matt., 28; Mark, 16; Luke, 24.

CHAPTER VII

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST AND MIRACLE

It is not within the purpose and scope of this thesis to conduct a detailed examination into all the specific "miracles" of the Gospels. But exception may be made in the case of that "miracle" which has been, and is, held to be so vitally central to the Christian faith. Something must be said to show the bearing which the principles of our discussion have upon the resurrection of Christ.

Let it be said at once that the question round which discussion now centres is not as to the *fact* of the resurrection but as to the *mode* of the resurrection. It is not necessary here, therefore, to examine the various theories maintained in the past which reject the resurrection *in toto*. Theories of imposture on the part of the disciples, of swoon not death on the cross, of *subjective* vision or hallucination, belong to an era of scepticism which has been left behind. They may, therefore, be passed by here without discussion. Former apologetic has very adequately dealt with them.[1] Today the centre of the discussion is the question whether the appearances of Christ were manifestations of Himself in the "identic" body which had been laid in the tomb, *or* appearances of His *real spiritual presence* while His physical body remained sleeping in the earth.

The name of Keim has been most prominently associated with this latter theory. It was his distinguishing merit, in this field of the resurrection, to show the complete inadequacy of the so-called "Vision" theory.[2] To him the appearances of Christ were *real* appearances, not subjective fancies or hallucinations. The visions which the disciples had of the living Christ were

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[1] Cf. Keim, *op. cit.*, Vol. VI, for a full discussion of these theories. Most apologetic works on the subject cover this ground.

[2] *Op. cit.*, Vol. VI, pp. 334 ff.

"not something humanly generated or self-generated"; they were "not blossom and fruit of an illusion-producing over-excitement." They were, on the other hand, "directly accompanied by astonishingly clear perceptions and resolves." And there is for them, said Keim, "one originating source . . . God and the glorified Christ."[3] The evidence that Jesus was alive Keim calls a "telegram from Heaven"; it was "given by His own impulsion and by the will of God." To Keim, "though much has fallen away, the secure faith-fortress of the resurrection of Jesus remains."[4]

This view of the resurrection has been largely adopted in "modernist" theological circles; and without doubt has considerable cogency with the thinking minds of today. It has, it is true, as Keim foretold, "displeased many, both on the right and on the left."[5] Yet it remains in the field as the only alternative to the view generally accepted in the past by the Church. The *fact* of the resurrection is maintained: the *mode* of the resurrection set forth in the Gospels is questioned.

This statement of the case, however, requires further elucidation: it will be regarded with question by those to whom the question of the *mode* and the question of the *fact* are inextricably one. We therefore have to face the issue that here arises — whether we are justified in treating as separate questions the *fact* of the resurrection and the *mode* of the resurrection.

A former apologetic maintained that we are not so justified. It was held that the fact of the resurrection is indissolubly one with the fact of the empty tomb; in other words, that the question as to whether Christ rose again was the question whether His body rose again. "Whoever," it was maintained, "denies a bodily resurrection should be honest enough no longer to speak of resurrection at all. Resurrection does not refer to the spirit, the continued existence of which Scripture takes as a matter of course, but only to the body, and its issuing forth alive from the grave. Only that can rise again which has before been laid down in the grave, and that is only the body, not the spirit. Let us then have done with these ambiguities."[6]

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[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 361.

[4] *Op. cit.*, pp. 364–65.

[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 362.

[6] Christlieb, *op. cit.*, p. 449.

The answer might be made to that contention that we *all*, conservative and liberal alike, use words in a loose sense. When we employ words to clothe our thought, we do not feel bound to their etymological or literal meaning. There are few, if any, today, for example, who when they speak of the "rising" of the sun feel that their use of the phrase indicates their acceptance of a pre-Copernican astronomy. If we are to be pedantically accurate, we must, I suppose, speak of the *appearance*, not the rising, of the sun. So likewise, it would doubtless be more accurate if those who feel unable to accept the *bodily* rising of Christ were to speak of His *appearances* to the disciples subsequent to His physical death. Such accuracy, however, is not demanded in regard to other terms by those who make the demand here. On the general ground of custom and usage, therefore, the continued use of the term "resurrection" by those who do not accept a bodily resurrection is justifiable — *provided* they believe that Christ died (as we view death) on the cross, and later manifested His living presence to the disciples.

In addition to this contention, it may be pointed out to those who demand literal exactitude in terminology that the word *resurrection* is also employed of the *general* resurrection, where, certainly, the connotation of the term differs from its connotation when we are speaking of the resurrection of Christ. The boomerang of exactitude of terminology comes back upon him who uses it. Whatever *our* resurrection may be held to mean, few if any would suggest that it means a literal resurrection of our present bodies. When *they* are laid to rest in the grave, the material substance which composes them remains *there*, even though in process of time the framework of these bodies undergoes disintegration — "dust to dust, ashes to ashes." To set forth the difference in connotation of the two uses of the term "resurrection," it has merely to be pointed out that it is part of the claim of the literal school of believers in Christ's resurrection that no material framework of His body was anywhere to be found, other than that which clothed His living presence. In addition to this consideration is the point contained in the question, What do we mean by *rising?* This term involves a spatial notion, and compels us to think of "up" and "down."

When then we speak of our resurrection, surely we are not held to maintain that spatial conceptions are of the essence of the belief!

These considerations seem adequate to justify the continued use of the term "resurrection" on the part of those who maintain the objective reality of Christ's *appearances* to His disciples, after the physical death on the cross, but not the *rising again of the body.*

At the same time, in favour of the contention of conservative apologetic, it must be allowed that the belief in the resurrection of Christ has meant to the church throughout the centuries the belief of the resurrection of His body — in other words, the belief in the empty tomb. And so involved within the common Christian consciousness is this view of the *mode* of the resurrection that if one hundred Christians chosen at random were asked to say what was meant by the resurrection of Christ, without doubt ninety-nine out of the hundred would indicate the view that it meant the rising again of Christ's body; in other words, that it involved the empty tomb. The fourth article of religion in the Book of Common Prayer is quite clear on this point: "Christ did truly rise again from death and took again His body, with flesh, bones and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature; wherewith He ascended into Heaven and there sitteth, until He return to judge all men at the last day." It would be difficult to find language which more expressly maintains that essential to the belief in Christ's resurrection is the belief that His physical body rose again from the sepulchre. The phraseology of the article is open to criticism, even from the standpoint of conservative apologetic, and few today would feel happy in expressing their belief in quite such terms. It is maintained, for example, by some who accept the bodily resurrection of Christ, that the language of this article is a relic of the gross materialism of the Middle Ages.[7] At the same time, the very "materialism" of the language indicates how essential to the doctrine the belief in the empty tomb was conceived to be.[8]

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[7] Cf., *e.g.*, *The Resurrection and Modern Thought*, Sparrow Simpson, p. 376.

[8] It is significant to note that the Wesleyan form of this article as adopted in 1882 omits the words "with flesh, bones."

The Westminster Confession is almost as unambiguous as the Anglican Article. "Christ was exalted in His resurrection, in that, not having seen corruption in death (of which it was not possible for Him to be held) and having the very same body in which He suffered, with the essential properties thereof (but without mortality, and other common infirmities belonging to this life) really united to His soul, He rose again from the dead the third day by His own power." [9]

A departure from this generally accepted sense of the term "resurrection" in reference to Christ's resurrection must therefore of necessity be confusing to those unversed in the discussions upon this theme, unless pains be taken to show what precisely is meant by the new connotation given to the term. This confusion, however, as we have already suggested, is one that must always be arising whenever familiar words are filled with a new content of meaning. The term "atom," for example, continues to be employed today when its content of meaning is so widely different from that of a generation ago.

The question, however, is much more than the legitimacy or otherwise of the use of the term "resurrection" by those who deny the bodily resurrection. The real question is, Which is the right content of meaning, the previously generally accepted view, or that which is so widely held in liberal theological circles? In other words, What are the facts?

We enter here the difficult and perplexing region of the historical evidence. A full exploration of this region is not our purpose.[10] But one thesis we should desire to maintain, namely, that *on grounds of evidence alone* it is not possible to settle one way or other the question as to the *bodily* resurrection of Christ.

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[9] Larger Catechism, Q. 52.

[10] The reader may be referred to the following books in English where the evidence is examined in detail. (1) Where the *bodily* resurrection is defended: *The Resurrection of our Lord*, Milligan; *The Resurrection and Modern Thought*, Sparrow Simpson; *The Resurrection of Jesus*, Orr; *The Miracles of the New Testament*, Headlam; *Belief in God*, Gore, pp. 262–72; *The Resurrection of Christ*, Shaw. (2) Where the *bodily* resurrection is rejected: Keim, Vol. VI, *op. cit.*; *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, R. W. Macan; *The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, Kirsopp Lake; *Miracles in the New Testament*, J. M. Thompson; Schmiedel in *Ency. Bib.*, article, "Resurrection and Ascension Narratives."

This position becomes increasingly plain as we seek to weigh up the evidence as found in the New Testament. It might be shown by the opposed conclusions arrived at by those who have sought to reach a just judgment from a painstaking scrutiny of the evidence. We do not wish to place too much weight upon this fact of the disagreement amongst those who have sought to estimate critically the value of the New Testament evidence. At the same time the fact of this disagreement remains and fortifies our own conclusion that a strictly historical judgment is impossible.

Of these disagreements we shall give a few illustrations. In regard to the evidence of St. Paul, rightly recognized as of supreme importance, divergent conclusions as to the *mode* of the resurrection of Christ believed in by him are reached. One conclusion is: "St. Paul shared with the Early Church the belief that the tomb had been found empty."[11] A similar conclusion is thus expressed: "There can be no reasonable doubt that what the Apostles understood on the evidence of the empty tomb and the appearances was a *corporal* resurrection — viz. that the body of Jesus had been rescued from corruption and raised to a new kind of life. Peter and Paul in the Acts are alike represented as expressing the conviction that 'He saw no corruption.'"[12] This is also the judgment, it is to be noted, of some who reject the corporal resurrection of Christ. After examining Paul's account in I Corinthians, 15, Professor Kirsopp Lake says: "The result, then, of an examination of the passages in which St. Paul speaks of the nature of the resurrection body of Christians points to the fact that he believed that at the resurrection of Jesus his body was changed from one of flesh and blood to one which was spiritual, incorruptible and immortal, in such a way that there was no trace left of the corruptible body of flesh and blood which had been left in the grave."[13] Harnack may also be cited here. He asks the question, "Did the apostle know of the message about the empty grave?" and answers, "While there are theologians of note who doubt it, I think it probable; but we cannot be quite certain about it."[14]

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[11] Headlam, *The Miracles of the New Testament*, p. 252.

[2] Gore, *op. cit.*, p. 264. [13] *Op. cit.*, p. 23. [14] *What is Christianity?* p. 164.

On the other hand, it has been confidently maintained that Paul "believed in the Resurrection without believing in the Empty Tomb." The same writer says, "We may believe *with St. Paul* that His human body remained in the grave."[15] Another writer, after quoting the "materialistic" details of Luke, 24: 36–43, asks: "Is it possible that the author of I Cor. 15, believed all this?" To which his answer is, "that he certainly did not."[16] Similarly Schmiedel holds: "That Paul knew of the empty sepulchre . . . can be maintained only in conjunction with the assumption that for particular reasons he kept silence regarding it";[17] he then goes on to examine these possible particular reasons which may be adduced to explain Paul's silence; and these he finds unsatisfactory.

It is, to us, quite obvious that St. Paul's evidence on the question of the empty tomb is of so uncertain a character that the conclusion we arrive at is determined by the presuppositions which we bring to its examination. He believed in the resurrection, for the living Christ had appeared to him. This belief was central to the Gospel he preached. But when we begin to scrutinize his references to the subject, and especially his most important utterance having bearing on the matter, viz., I Cor. 15, in an endeavour to find out whether the *corporal* resurrection was an essential part of his belief, we have to acknowledge that our data are insufficient for a secure conclusion. Some maintain that St. Paul's lack of specific mention of the empty grave indicates either that he knew nothing of it, or that it did not fit in with his ideas on the subject. Others deny that his absence of reference to the empty tomb proves his ignorance of it, and maintain with cogency that it fits in with the whole circle of his ideas as expressed in I Cor. 15.[18] Most candid thinkers will acknowledge that their presuppositions will decide the conclusion reached on this matter.

When we turn to the evidence of the synoptists, it is not possible to doubt that their belief in the resurrection was accompanied by a belief in the reanimation of the body that was laid in the tomb. Whether this latter belief was right or no, is not at this point the question. It is impossible to read the original account of St. Mark — 16 : 1–8 — with the parallel passages in Matthew — 28 : 1–15 — and Luke — 24 : 1–12 — without concluding that the Evangelists at any rate believed in the empty tomb; or, to put it otherwise, believed in a mode of the resurrection of Christ which required the resuscitation of His body. The Gospel narratives, in spite of their divergencies in detail, yield, it has been said, "a uniform and very impressive tradition that the grave was empty on Easter Day." [19] That the Evangelists at least believed this can be doubted by no reasonable mind.

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[15] J. M. Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 172, 211.

[16] Canon (now Bishop) Hensley Henson in *Hibbert Journal*, April, 1904, p. 488.

[17] Article on "Resurrection," etc., in *Ency. Bib.*

[18] Cf. Sparrow Simpson, *op. cit.*, pp. 28 ff., and Orr, *op. cit.*, pp. 39 ff. Both maintain this latter view.

When we turn now to ask the question, Does the rest of the Evangelists' evidence as to the resurrection of Christ harmonize with this belief, we are at once in the region of controversy. That they believed in the empty grave is hardly open to question. But it is suggested that they themselves give indications which cast doubt upon the reality of the resurrection of Christ's *body*. We have here a large and disputable question.

Those who maintain that the Evangelists *do* give us such indications point to what Keim called "a capricious alternating between a subtile and a gross corporeity, which is self-contradictory." [20] It is held that their accounts of the resurrection body of Christ constitute a portraiture containing incompatible features. On the one hand, the fact that Christ passed through closed doors points, it is held, to a resurrection of His spirit, and not of His body. On the other hand, the fact that they could "handle" and "see" Him, and that He could eat material food, points, it is held, to a reanimation of His "Body." [21]

The so-called incompatibility or contradictoriness of these views is held, also, to be substantiated by the fact that the risen Jesus appeared to friends and never to enemies. The fact here adduced is of course of significance for a theory of the resurrection; it is a factor in the problem to be solved. But it has been frequently utilized to throw discredit on the objective reality of the appearances themselves. As early as the second century Celsus had seized hold of this point. Arguing against the resurrection of Jesus he maintained: "He ought to have appeared to those who had ill-treated him, and to him who had condemned him, and to all men universally." [22] Spinoza, likewise, laid emphasis on the same point. "I shall only ask you to observe," he wrote to Oldenburg, "that Christ did not appear personally either to the Council, or to Pilate, or to any incredulous or indifferent person, but to believers only." [23] Woolston, likewise, in his once-famous "Discourses" uses the same argument.[24]

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[19] Sparrow Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

[20] *Op. cit.*, Vol. VI, p. 340.

[21] We do not here enter upon the question whether historical criticism may be justified or no in expunging these "materialistic details" recorded by Matthew and Luke from the realm of *facts* (see Note on the question of "Miraculous Exaggeration" at the end of previous chapter). On such a question the judgment in the last resort is determined by presuppositions which cannot be strictly regarded as "historical evidence."

Have we then in the New Testament two views of Christ's resurrection appearances which are self-contradictory? Many answer this question in the positive. And they further seek to show that the "grosser" conceptions indicate the intrusion of materialistic views. Keim held, fifty years ago, that "in order to satisfy Jewish belief and thought, and to meet Jewish mistrust and calumny, as objective and materialistic a colouring was given to the resurrection as was possible under the circumstances." [25] Within recent years it has been said that the "victory of materialism had gone to great lengths within the New Testament itself. The emptiness of the sepulchre might conceivably be as little worthy of credence as the materialistic details in St. Matthew, 28:9, and Luke, 24:36 f." [26] Dr. Moffatt has guardedly suggested his acceptance of the same view. "The religious experience of the risen Lord may be held to have suggested the further belief in the empty tomb, just as the very definiteness of the religious conviction that Jesus lived led Luke to 'materialise' the Resurrection stories by asserting that Jesus actually ate with His disciples after death." [27]

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[22] Cf. Origen, *Contra Celsum*, Vol. II, p. lxiii.

[23] Cf. *Life of Spinoza*, R. Willis, p. 265.

[24] Cf. Sixth Discourse, where he deals with the resurrection (1729 ed., pp. 22 f.). An anonymous reply to this was published under the unwieldy title "An enquiry into the force of the objection made against the Resurrection of Christ from the circumstance of His not appearing openly to the rulers and people of the Jews after He rose from the dead, wherein what Mr. Woolston offers on that head in his Sixth Discourse is particularly considered" (London, 1730)

[25] *Op. cit.*, Vol. VI, pp. 299–300.

[26] Hensley Henson in *Hibbert Journal*, April, 1904, p. 489.

It must, however, be maintained that to regard the two types of appearances—which for convenience may be called "spiritual" and "material" — as self-contradictory is to beg the very question at issue. How do we know that they are self-contradictory? Should the answer be that we cannot form any conception of a "body" which can at the same time pass through closed doors and be felt and handled, then indeed, to our present knowledge and experience, that may be taken as true. But let it be noted that the inability to form any conception of such a "body" is no historical argument against such a "body" of Christ. It is really only one way of saying that *we* have no experience of such a "body." Historical criticism has gone beyond its province in regarding the "two modes" of Christ's appearances as self-contradictory. It has formed, not a historical judgment upon the facts, but an *à priori* judgment as to what is possible and what impossible. The presence of stories in the Gospels which *to our experience* suggest "incompatibility" engenders a feeling of deep suspicion in the historical critic who seeks to appreciate their historical value. This suspicion may not be unjustifiable — in fact in view of our present experience that such things "do not happen" it is difficult to see how the critic can be expected to approach these stories with any other feeling. At the same time he can be asked to remember the *inadequacy* of our experience. We have not, of this we at least have inherent certitude, experience of every possibility in this infinite and unfathomed universe. Does this consciousness of the *inadequacy* of our experience justify the belief that the relation of so unique a spirit as that of Christ to His body rendered "possible" that which to a feebler spirit is "impossible"? That is the difficult, and, of course for the present, the insoluble problem, the unanswerable question. At any rate it should not be considered justifiable in the historical critic to eliminate certain *corporeal* stories of Christ's appearances on the sole ground of "impossibility" or, which comes to the same thing, "incompatibility" with other stories of His *spiritual* appearances. Arguments based upon such "impossibility" and "incompatibility" inevitably call forth the retort that the "incompatibility" of these stories, so far from casting doubt upon them, is an argument for accepting them. It has been held for example that "these contradictory aspects, instead of casting a suspicion on the appearances, are of the essence of the problem which they were intended to solve."[28] Like the fact that the appearances of Christ were given to friends and not to enemies, the so-called incompatibility of these stories may be regarded as a factor of considerable importance for our theory of the risen body of Christ, and is not to be regarded as itself deciding the inhistoricity of the narratives.

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[27] *Op. cit.*, p. 165.

A strictly historical judgment as to the *mode* of Christ's resurrection seems to us to be therefore impossible. On the one hand, those who deny the bodily resurrection, while they may seek with impartiality to scrutinize the documentary evidence, must themselves acknowledge that there are frequent cases where the weight given to evidence is determined by the bias of pre-decided views. Passages which do not fit in with these views can, by an imaginative reconstruction of the facts which may or may not be in accordance with the truth, be with facility extirpated from the realm of historical narrative. On the other hand, those who maintain the bodily resurrection of Christ, while they seek to give due weight to modern critical methods of approach to the New Testament, will acknowledge that the deciding weight comes from other considerations. These considerations have a twofold source: *first*, a tenacious holding to the general reliability of the Gospel narratives, and *second*, a deep feeling for the uniqueness of Christ's person and His work. Both these considerations predispose the minds of some to the acceptance of so great a "miracle" as the physical resurrection.

It seems well that these things should here be stated. In regard to such an event as the resurrection of Christ, there is no such thing as unbiased historical criticism. Our minds do not work *in vacuo*. Different minds give different weights to the same "evidence." The ultimate judgment is determined by

[28] *The Christ of History and Experience*, Forrest, p. 150.

what we conceive as "possible" and "impossible." If such a resurrection body as that described by the Evangelists be held to be impossible, then of course, and of necessity, we must conclude that they had "materialized" the stories; then of course, and of necessity, we shall make imaginative surmises to "explain" the empty tomb. But these attitudes and judgments, whether justifiable or no, are not the free unfettered judgments of dispassionate exactitude of mind; they are imposed upon us by that unseen arbiter who tips the balances on this side or that — the whole subconscious bias of our presuppositions.

For the present it seems likely that the two forms of belief in the resurrection which we have considered will continue to be maintained. Whether this divergence of view will always remain is indeed a question. Some hold that these two forms of the belief will continue to stand as alternative hypotheses. "How Jesus' form of being passed out of one that was earthly and corporeal into one higher and more earthly," says Wendland, "is a problem beyond our analysis and knowledge, for observation is here impossible. It is probable that Christian opinion will always exhibit two forms of the idea — one more concrete, asserting a miraculous transfiguration of the earthly body; the other more spiritual, holding that Christ, laying aside the body, was transfigured in heavenly glory."[29]

This judgment may seem to those who cannot endure the lack of precision in their beliefs as somewhat lame and unsatisfying. For the present, however, it stands.

Yet it is well to subject to criticism two opposed prejudgments which frequently determine our conclusion. If bias is inevitable, let us at least examine our bias, and if it be found an untenable one, let us frankly discard it.

The *first* is the bias of conservatism, which while containing great substance of truth, may easily lead us astray. It is held that "if Christ was what His Church has hitherto believed Him to be . . . there is no antecedent presumption against His Resurrection; rather it is incredible that He should have remained the prey of death."[30] Now this is profoundly true and perhaps requires stating. At the same time, the incredibility that Christ should have remained the prey of death does not carry with it an "antecedent presumption" that His appearances to the disciples and His presence in the world should necessitate an empty tomb, or, stated otherwise, should require a reanimation of His physical body.

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[29] Wendland, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

[30] Orr, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

The *second* is the bias of radicalism, which discredits the New Testament account of Christ's resurrection body on the ground that it involves a violation of law. An oft-quoted statement is that of the late Dr. Hastings Rashdall: "The disappearance or absolute annihilation, the reanimation or the sudden transformation into something not yet quite material, and yet not quite spiritual, of a really dead body, would involve the violation of the best ascertained laws of physics, chemistry, and physiology. Were the testimony fifty times stronger than it is, any hypothesis would be more possible than that. But in the present state of our knowledge of the kind of causality which is discovered in the relation between mind and mind, or between mind and body, there is nothing to be said against the possibility of an experience of Christ to His disciples which was a real, though super-normal psychological event, but which involved nothing which can properly be spoken of as a suspension of natural law."[31] Here in the name of science, the physical resurrection of Christ is regarded as "impossible." It is held to be a "violation" of natural law. This conviction of the impossibility of such a happening makes unnecessary the examination of the evidence in favour of it; no matter how strong that evidence be it can never be regarded otherwise than as invalid. Even were it fifty times stronger than it is, it would still not merit examination. The event being impossible, there really can be no such thing as "evidence." We are here strongly reminded of Hume's famous judgment: "What have we to oppose to such a cloud of witnesses, but the absolute impossibility or miraculous nature of the events which they relate?"

We need not labour again the conclusions of previous chapters to show the invalidity of such a view. Suffice it for us to state here the judgment on this point of a man of science. Sir Oliver Lodge says, speaking of the physical resurrection of Christ:

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[31] Quoted by Kirsopp Lake, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

"I am not one to seek to deny the possibility on scientific grounds,"[32] this, while refusing to accept the historical evidence for it because of its alleged weakness. The point we emphasize here is not the strength or the weakness of the evidence, for that strength or weakness is *relative* to ourselves with our varying presuppositions, but the fact that the truly scientific attitude refuses to speak of the alleged physical resurrection of Christ as a "violation" of law and as therefore impossible.

So much being acknowledged, it may seem but cautious wisdom to hold in mind the view that the day may come when science may go even further than this abstract acknowledgment, and herself give us reasons to suppose that the influence of so unique a spirit as that of Christ upon His body, and the relation between these two, is adequate even to what we call the *physical* resurrection. When psychological science is beginning to think and to speak of that mysterious substance "ectoplasm" which may "extrude" from the physical body, is it altogether too hazardous to envisage yet deeper possibilities? Do not the modern ways of regarding "matter" make it, to say the least, less difficult than heretofore to conceive of such a resurrection body of Christ as is adumbrated in the Gospels? Is the inter-penetrability of two material substances so "impossible" as at one time it seemed? If "matter" and "spirit" are not such directly opposed and different "substances" as was so frequently at one time supposed, is it inconceivable that so unique a spirit as that of Jesus could re-inhabit His "earthly tabernacle," and in ways still mysterious to us, make it wholly subservient to His purposes for the disciples and the world? I leave these questions to the reader — and to the future. I should like to express my own judgment here in the words of Dr. J. O. F. Murray: "The physical laws in obedience to which, the particular force by the operation of which, this result (*i.e.*, the Resurrection of Christ) was attained, are at present unknown to us, and it is possible that they may remain unknown. No one can wish anything but Godspeed to those who press onward in the hope that a fuller knowledge of the constitution of matter and a closer study of psychic phenomena may enable them in the end to lift the veil."[33]

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[32] *Man and the Universe* (cheap ed.), p. 169.

[33] *Cambridge Theological Essays*, p. 340.

Before leaving the question as to the nature of the mode of the resurrection, we may be reminded that there is another possibility to the two which have been considered — the possibility, namely, that the resurrection was a purely "spiritual" fact, yet God in order to assure the disciples' faith "withdrew into nothingness" the body which Christ had left in the tomb. This possibility, we frankly confess, would have eluded our consideration altogether, so astounding does it seem, if it had not been specifically suggested by a recent writer. Accepting the view that Christ rose, but not in the body, he goes on to say: "I offer no solution of the problem which the narrative presents as to what happened to the body, though my expectation is that it will be solved, if ever, by one of two alternatives: either the tradition was mistaken and the body was disposed of in some unknown but natural manner, or else the same creative power which had brought into being the mortal frame withdrew it into nothingness. If this latter is the fact, there would be reason to ask why such special intervention of Deity was needed? I do not know what other reason suggests itself than that the witnesses, in the then state of psychologic knowledge, would have found it harder to accept the assurance of Jesus, 'It is I myself,' if they had been sure that all the while Jesus was lying a corpse in Joseph's vault."[34] The difficulties in the way of this latter hypothesis, if we understand it aright, are so stupendous as to render the orthodox view of Christ's resurrection body comparatively easy of acceptance. Are we to take "nothingness" literally in the phrase "withdrawing into nothingness"; in other words, that it is not merely a miracle of disappearance, but a miracle of complete annihilation? Or are we, on the other hand, to regard "nothingness" as suggesting an instantaneous, instead of a gradual, disintegration of the body — after the manner of the Augustinian "acceleration of natural processes" type of miracle? In either case, the traditional view is intrinsically more credible. Why the alternatives presented by Dr. Skrine were (1) a spiritual resurrection involving the belief that the body was left somewhere in the earth, and (2) a spiritual resurrection involving a miracle of the disappearance or annihilation of the body, it is exceedingly difficult to understand. And why it should be said of the usually accepted view of Christ's resurrection body that "Nature offers no example of such a transformation" (*op. cit.*, p. 72) without pointing out that this is just as true of the "miracle of disappearance" hypothesis, it is not at all easy to perceive. If those who accept the non-corporeal resurrection of Christ were convinced that it involved them in the acceptance of the possibility of such a miracle of disappearance, they might well turn with relief to the traditional view of a corporeal resurrection.

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[34] *The Gospel of the Manhood*, Skrine (1922), p. 71.

Whatever, however, may be the judgment arrived at with regard to the *mode* of the resurrection the "miraculous" nature of the event is retained. Even should the time come when the physical resurrection of Christ be universally given up (a supposition whose likelihood may be contested) the fact of Christ's *real* spiritual appearances to His disciples will remain as, in the true sense, "miraculous." For the miraculous nature of an event does not belong necessarily to the physical order. "Miracle" truly conceived is not an event, it is an "act." Our ignorance of the processes by which an event happened is not of the essence of the miraculous concept, nor is our knowledge of those processes fatal to its "miraculous" nature. Neither is "scientific inexplicability" necessary to that concept, nor is "scientific explicability" destructive of that concept. If, on the one hand, it were ever to be "proved" that the physical body of Christ remained in the earth and became subject to the customary disintegrative processes, we do not see that the "miraculous" character of the resurrection is affected. If, on the other hand, science were one day to discover in human personality spiritual potencies adequate for the acceptance, and adequate to the "explanation" of the physical resurrection, we do not, further, see that its "miraculous" character is affected. "The revelation contained in the fact does not depend on our ignorance of the method by which it was wrought";[35] nor, we may add, does that revelation disappear with the knowledge of its scientific processes.

"The revelation contained in the fact" of the resurrection — it is *this*, and only this, that justifies the term "miraculous" as applied to the resurrection of Christ. As to what that "revelation" was, both the history of those previously despairing disciples and the whole history of the Christian Church unmistakably reveal. There came to the disciples the conviction that Jesus *lived*, and that *He was with them* in the work He had called them to continue. Was not *that* "revelation"?

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[35] *Cambridge Theological Essays*, p. 340.

It has, however, to be clearly pointed out that we assign the terms "revelation" and "miracle" to the resurrection of Christ, not because it states the mere fact that Christ did not die at Golgotha. This of course it does, and that fact in itself comes as a kind of divine reassurance to those who are perplexed by the question as to whether their "instinctive" belief in personal survival after what we call death is of valid worth or no. Even so, the resurrection of Christ is infinitely more than a fact of the scientific order. Being a fact, it is a fact for Science, just as all observed psychical phenomena when verified are scientific facts. And it is idle for Christian apologetic to say that the *fact* of the resurrection of Christ is not a fact for science. It is only by confusion of thought that we deny to science the right to place that fact alongside other ascertained facts for possible scientific formulation. To call the mere *fact* of Christ's survival of the death on the Cross a "miracle," in the old sense as an event outside the realm of science, is to lead us back into the old terrain of a universe where the natural and the supernatural are like two opponents in the lists, or like two entities each or either of which may be the "cause" of an event.

This consideration if firmly grasped will meet the possible objection of those who might argue that we have no more right to regard the resurrection of Christ as miraculous than we have to regard the "spiritistic" messages revealed by psychical research as miraculous. This possible objection, begotten as it is of a failure to note the distinction between *fact* and *truth*, between *event* and *value*, we mention at this point in order to emphasize the fundamental distinction between the resurrection of Christ and these other facts, if such indeed they be. That fundamental distinction is that whereas the resurrection of Christ in stating the fact of His survival of death is a fact parallel to any other scientifically verified facts of a similar order, the resurrection of Christ is, further, *the manifestation of the ultimates which give to the universe its meaning, and to mankind his place within that meaning.*

Let it be clearly noted that the resurrection of Christ is the resurrection *of Christ.* The question then of the basal and essential difference between His appearances after "death" and other psychical messages from the unknown and unseen lies in just this, that He by His life was a revelation of love, beauty, and truth. His resurrection contains the revelation that these Ultimates were not ephemeral phantoms which showed themselves for a moment in time, and then were lost forever. The evil achieved at Golgotha was man's end, but it was not God's end. The last word belonged to Him. And His "last word" was the vindication from out the unseen and scientifically unknown of the eternal reality which Christ was. It was also the validation of the work He had sought to do, and carried in itself the assurance of the ultimate triumphant consummation of that work. For it revealed that a God of holy love is ever among us, *acting* for the salvation of the world.

The miraculous nature of the resurrection then lies not in the fact that a man lived again after death, but in the kind of man who lived again. Christians are unfaithful to the rich content of the resurrection in regarding it as a "proof" of immortality. The thing that matters most is not whether each personal being lives forever. There is little or no religious value in that idea as so frequently conceived, even though it should be true. The best instincts of humanity are concerned not with the duration of existence but with the quality of existence; not in the life that is counted in years, but in the life that is measured by its worth. If it is true that even in this life

"We live in deeds not years
In thoughts, not in figures on a dial,"

then assuredly the mere certitude that men will go on living after death has little more religion in it than the chemical doctrine of the indestructibility of matter.[36]

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[36] It is worthy of note that many eminent psychical researches are not loath to recognize that their study cannot displace "religion." Sir W. F. Barrett, for

What we have to stand for in regard to the resurrection is that Christ's appearances after death were the *acts* of the living Christ, who was indeed "the effulgence of God's glory, the express image of His Substance." Those who make this acknowledgment are, to our view, standing true to a valid supernaturalism, whatever may be their judgment as to the empty tomb.

It seems desirable that the two schools of thought within the Church with regard to the resurrection should come to this common recognition. If they cannot as yet agree as to the *mode*, they may at least, it is to be hoped, agree as to the *fact*. Should that desirable consummation be reached, the defenders of the physical resurrection will cease to discredit the views of the other party as those of a "bastard supernaturalism"[37]; and the defenders of what is called the "Spiritual Resurrection" will cease to regard the views of the others as rendered obsolete by what they hold as the "violation" of the formulations of science.

Christian apologetic must come to see that the belief in a certain *mode* of the "miracle of the Resurrection" cannot be regarded as a duty binding upon all who profess the faith. The *corporeal* resurrection of Christ must not be solidified into a dogmatic *malleus hereticorum*. These solidifications, it may be pointed out, have a way of eventually "hammering" their makers more effectively than those they were thought to "hammer." The question as to which "mode" of the resurrection is historical, we are not in a position to "prove" to a demonstration, since the "evidence" one way or other is inconclusive. Whichever mode we believe in is determined not by our "Faith" but by our scientific judgment. We may, indeed, be content to let either a traditional orthodoxy or an "infallible" institution settle this scientific judgment for us — but that intellectual submission, let no one think, is *of faith*, unless indeed we rob this great word of its priceless content of *spiritual* significance

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example, after freely acknowledging that "the evidence" adduced by *Psychical Research* cannot afford "any proof of immortality" went on to declare: "Nor can any investigations yield scientific proof of that larger, higher, and enduring life which we desire and mean by immortality." (*Psychical Research*, 1921 ed., p. 245.)

[37] Cf. Bruce, *Apologetics*, p. 393.

and bring it down to that low level where it simply means the surrender of the mind to an exterior authority, whether to some body which has the pertinacity to call itself "infallible" or to a "dogmatic" tradition which involves a similar claim. No, faith has to do with eternal spiritual realities and values, not with the modes by which these are mediated to us. Though these "modes" are of supreme interest to science, they are not of *essential* interest to religion, least of all to Christianity. For Christianity is the religion not of "signs and wonders," but of "Spirit and Personality."

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Additional Note on the Rolled-away Stone

Sir Oliver Lodge goes on to say after the utterance cited on page 357: "As regards any proof of *material* resurrection or resuscitation, the evidence adduced in the Gospels is not such as will bear scrutiny: it offers no case to the Society for Psychical Research. If the stone and the seal had been found intact, the duty on watch, — and yet the tomb empty, — there would have been something to investigate. But to find the place abandoned, and the stone rolled away, is equivalent to finding the grave rifled: no question of dematerialisation need arise."

The hypothesis here suggested that someone had rolled away the stone in order to take away the body has its own very considerable historical difficulties to encounter. Who, we ask, did this? Friends? or enemies? Either of these suppositions raises considerable difficulties to the historian who would account for early Christianity. If, however, it be answered, Neither friends nor enemies but a mere body-snatcher, it may be pointed out that this is a guess raised to meet the historical difficulties inherent in the hypothesis.

We cannot see, however, that the mere fact that the stone was rolled away is equivalent to the grave having been rifled. If "dematerialisation" is recognized at all as "possible," or at least as not impossible, we cannot see that the moving of the stone by the "dematerialised" risen Christ is any more impossible than the mere fact of such dematerialisation. If the latter be recognized as a possible hypothesis at all, the fact of the rolled-away stone, instead of being regarded as conclusive evidence against it, may rather be regarded as inherently consistent with it. We are not unaware of the difficulties which must arise from the hypothesis that the risen Christ Himself removed the stone. On the one hand, it may be said that a "dematerialized" Christ could have emerged from the tomb without the removal of a stone. To which we agree, but must point out that it is the *fact* of the rolled-away stone we have to concern ourselves with; and the hypothesis that a "dematerialized" Christ *could* have moved what we call "matter" will surely not be disputed, at least by one who like Sir Oliver Lodge accepts the moving of material objects by spiritual agency. On the other hand, it will be said that the Gospel narrative says that "an angel" removed the stone, and not the risen Christ (Matthew, 28 : 2). The fact that Matthew narrates this is of course undeniable; but the fact to which he bears testimony is not of the same unquestionable character. For it is to be noted that he alone of the Evangelists tells us that an angel rolled away the stone. Mark (16 : 4), Luke (24 : 2), and John (20 : 1) merely tell us that the stone was found rolled back. (Another instance of Matthew's imaginative embellishment of the Marcan narrative?)

With regard to the question of the rolled-away stone it is interesting to remember the medieval interpretation of it — that it was removed by an angel, *not before*, but *after* the resurrection of Christ. St. Matthew's narrative in 28 : 2 furnished a starting point from which the ingenious subtleties of the medieval theological mind began a very tortuous mental pilgrimaging. The stone was rolled away by the angel not in order that Christ should issue forth from the tomb, but in order that men should know that he had risen. The rolled-away stone is therefore an *additional* and, from our point of view, far less credible "miracle" than the view that the rolled-away stone was of one "miracle-piece" with the resurrection itself. The additional "miracle" involved is that an angelic visitant achieved by rolling away the stone a *miracle of demonstration*. Further, the medieval view that the stone was rolled away *after* Christ had issued from the tomb was regarded as a parallel to the bizarre notion (to which we refer at page 385 f.) of the "*virginitas in partu.*" "Thus did Thou shew, O Lord, by Thy resurrection from the grave, the miracle of Thy birth, for each was closed and each was sealed, both the grave and the womb. Thou wast pure in the womb and living in the grave, and Mary's womb, like the grave, bore an unbroken seal." [38]

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[38] S. Ephraim Syrus. Cited by Hirn, *The Sacred Shrine*, p. 399. See also the medieval authorities there cited.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PERSON OF CHRIST AND THE MIRACULOUS
OR
THE INCARNATION AND MIRACLE

Our previous discussions have shown us that the historical and scientific study of alleged "miracles" cannot be divorced from the study of personality. The failure to regard the still-unexplored potencies resident in personality has led in the past to assertions as to what is possible and what impossible, some of which have afterwards had to be rescinded or revised. On the basis of an inadequate knowledge of the deeps *within* us have been erected assertions as to impossibilities *without* us. The difficulty and perplexity of the historical problem lies in the fact that we are called upon to decide what happened and what did not happen on data which are never quite commensurate for a final decision. The historian's greatest difficulty is when he is called to give a decision when the following two conflicting forces are at work on his own mind. First, the recognition of the "miracle tendency" of the human mind, and second, the recognition of the possibility of happenings explicable by forces within the personality still unexplored. What weight has he to give respectively to these two contending arguments? That is the perplexing question. The incommensurateness of the historian's data lies, then, we believe, in our at present inadequate knowledge of the influence of mind over body, of spirit over matter. While that incommensurateness must remain for the present, and thus retard a final decision as to which so-called "miracles" are left to us as historical, enough knowledge has been gained to show that some events regarded as impossible in the past are within the scope of things possible.

In regard to the so-called "miracles" recorded of Christ, this type of consideration will seem to some to demand emphasis.

If, however, it be acknowledged to be applicable to the matter in hand, that does not warrant its utilization in such a way as to suggest that there is any *necessary* connection between abnormal potentiality over "Nature," and uniqueness in goodness and spiritual insight.

The important question, however, is not the specific so-called "miracles" of the Gospels but the person whose life and teaching is there narrated. This is the essentially important question which now arises. If "Christianity is Christ," the discussion may now be regarded as reaching its culminating stage.

Let it be clearly noted what the question here is. "There is in Christianity," said the late Dr. Salmon in his early and conservative days, "but one miracle, the appearance in the world of a supernatural Person."[1] The question, then, may be put in this way: Is Jesus a 'miraculous' Person? If so, in what sense?

Now it is interesting and highly significant to note that recent apologetic for the traditional concept of the miraculous is unanimous in stating that this is the real question. It is no longer pleaded, even by conservative apologetic, that the "miracles" of the Gospels substantiate the divinity of Christ. What is still however pleaded is that His "miraculous" person substantiates their historicity. This latter plea demands close and critical scrutiny.

It will not be doubted that the consensus of recent miracle apologetic approaches them through Him, not Him through them. It is not they, it is held, that make Him credible; it is He who makes them credible. "The power to work miracles could never prove its possessor to be a person so extraordinary as we conceive Christ to be; but Christ once conceived to be the extraordinary Person we believe Him to be, miracles become to Him both natural and necessary."[2] This is the general plea of recent miracle apologetic, though expressed with varying degrees of care and cogency.

Now the altered position which "miracle apologetic" has taken, as revealed by these utterances, we regard as highly significant. It means that the day has gone, quite clearly gone, when an event called a "miracle" could be regarded as a "proof" of the divine. That, however, is quite a subsidiary point. The main point to consider is the underlying reason for this changed point of view. Our belief is that it is indicative of a movement which is much deeper than conservative apologetic, still reluctant to part with miracles in the old sense, still appreciates.

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[1] *Evolution and Other Papers* (cheap ed.), p. 35.

[2] Fairbairn, *Studies in the Life of Christ*, p. 151.

What are the main underlying causes of this retreat? They are not, we believe, primarily historical — though critical research may well show that many may not be regarded as historical. These causes are primarily a changed philosophy of the natural and the supernatural, begotten or necessitated by the investigation, first, of the implicates of science, and, second, of the implicates of religion. And these implicates of science and religion assure us respectively that the universe is *rational* and the universe is *moral.*

If this analysis of the meaning of the changed point of view in regard to Gospel miracles is correct, we are forbidden to stop at the point which conservative miracle apologetic of the Gospels has now reached. We have not *thought through* the question when we retreat from the position that miracles prove or substantiate a "miraculous" revelation or a "miraculous" person to the position that the "miraculous" revelation or the "miraculous" person proves or substantiates the "miracles" wrought in connection therewith. We cannot, to put it more directly, arrest our thought with the recognition of the centrality in the discussion of the "miraculous" person of our Lord. While that recognition may be sufficient for devotion it is not quite sufficient for thought. Every religious soul may indeed say at this point and say with assurance: Here is my divine Lord, I must worship and seek to serve him. But the "urge" of philosophic thought compels us, while acknowledging the truth and validity of that affirmation of the religious consciousness, to go on to ask: What exactly is meant when His person is spoken of as "miraculous"?

The *necessity* of this question is forced upon us by the ambiguous arguments adduced in the past, and still sometimes adduced, by conservative apologetic. Let us resort to the stage of Gospel miracle defence reached by such apologetic — the argument, namely, that "miracles" recorded of Christ become inherently credible when it is remembered that His person is "miraculous."

What, we are compelled to ask, does this plea mean? Does it mean that the *historicity* of specific narrated "miracles" is substantiated by the person of Christ manifested to us in the Gospels? Or does it mean that a *specific concept* held to explain these "miracles" (namely, the traditional concept of "violation," supernatural intervention, interposition, etc.) is substantiated by His person? It is to be deplored that the two issues involved by these two questions have been and continue to be confused almost to the point of begetting despair of ever disentangling them. The *historicity* of an event and a *specific philosophic concept of the miraculous*, we must again maintain, are not the same question. Even conservative apologetic *parenthetically and obliquely* acknowledges this whenever it gives up the historicity of certain "miracles" recorded in the Gospels and yet retains the traditional miracle concept. When an event that has been recognised as a "miracle" ceases to be regarded by traditional apologetic as historical, the "miracle" concept which was used to interpret that event when it was regarded as historical is still retained. The extraordinary position has now arisen when the historicity of exceedingly few specific "miracles" is defended even by conservative apologetic and yet the concept which was employed to interpret the whole body of one-time accepted "miracles" is still retained. In this, there is obviously an *implicit* acknowledgment that "miracle" as *fact* and the "miracle" *idea* are separate questions. With the increasing acknowledgment of doubt or suspicion as to the historicity of specific "miracles" this acknowledgment will become emphatic and open. It will then be necessary to concentrate on the miraculous concept, and to seek to restate it in an acceptable form. This present work is inspired by the desire to attempt such restatement, and to attempt it before such a situation arises as will call forth the sneer of the unsympathetic that Christian apologetic is always led by, and never leads, the thought of the age.

Reluctance, however, is still shown to dissociate the question of the historicity of "miracles" from the religious and philosophic concept of miracle. The "argument" is still occasionally adduced that the "miraculous" person of Christ substantiates the "miracles" related of Him. A close scrutiny, however, of the assertion reveals its complete invalidity.[3]

When stripped of ambiguities, the language of traditional apologetic for miracle in the Gospels is seen to mean this: that the person of Christ substantiates a certain "miracle" concept, and that this "miracle" concept substantiates the historicity of events which have been throughout past ages interpreted in the light of that concept.

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[3] The late Dr. Fairbairn maintained, if we understand him aright, that in the Gospels themselves such a standpoint is discernible. "What is common to all four Evangelists," he wrote, "and what is in their mind essential, is the idea not that the miraculous history proves the person to be supernatural, but that the history was miraculous, because it articulated and manifested the supernatural person" (*Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, p. 326). The difficulty in the way of discussing such a statement is caused by the ambiguity of the terms "miraculous" and "supernatural" employed. If Fairbairn meant that essential to the minds of the Evangelists was the idea that the "supernatural" person of Christ proved the *historicity* of the specific "miracles" there recorded, we should find it difficult to agree that such a standpoint was evidenced by our Gospels. If, on the other hand, he meant by the phrase, "the history was miraculous," not *the historicity of specific miracles* but the *revelation inherent in the life and ministry of Christ*, we should cordially agree. The latter interpretation of the phrase ("the history was miraculous") is one we ourselves would employ of the *whole* life and ministry of Christ; but it should be clearly noted that by the "history" we should mean "*the whole history*," and not specific and so-called "miracles." As we employ the term "miraculous," the *whole* life of Christ was "miraculous" and *not* specific acts that have had appropriated to them the term "miracles." We come here, doubtless, to the crux of the question; this is the touchstone which determines whether we are going to retain a concept of the "miraculous" which involves the traditional dualism of natural and supernatural acts and events, *or* to discard that dualism and hence construe the concept of the miraculous not in terms of *scientific fact*, but in terms of *religious revelation*. The question is, Is *all* in Christ *miraculous?* Or is that only *miraculous* which (like such recorded incidents as the feeding of the five thousand, etc.) seems to prove abnormal power. Now if the latter standpoint be adopted, the *miraculous* is being construed in terms of *abnormality*. For let it be clearly noted that such recorded events as the feeding of the five thousand, if historical, would merely substantiate the possession of *unusual or abnormal power* on the part of Christ, and would not by any means necessarily substantiate the possession of a power derived from an omnipotent source. If such events only, therefore, are "miraculous," the miraculous is being regarded as equivalent to, or as necessarily involving, abnormality in power. Such a use of the term "miraculous" — and we do not think it can be denied with any cogency that such a use has been common to the defenders of traditional miracle apologetic — brings it down to a very low level, a level where the naïvely "supernatural" views of past unscientific ages have their home. For ourselves we dare not bring down the term "miraculous" to such a level. It must, in our view, be regarded as a religious term, and questions of "normality" or "abnormality" (essentially scientific questions) do not at all arise. Every personality which reveals to us the divine is miraculous.

Now the only way of penetrating into this closed-circle of traditional argument is to leap over the circumference into the centre, and to interrogate the central "miracle" concept itself. Where does *it* come from? What is its real source? Is there any certitude that *it* is necessarily involved by the unique personality of Jesus Christ?

This without any manner of doubt brings us to the heart of the question. Traditional apologetic believes that the miracle concept as maintained throughout the past is necessarily involved in the New Testament portraiture of the personality of Jesus Christ, or in the truth maintained by the term "Incarnation." It maintains, in other words, that to give up that "miracle concept" is to destroy the unique personality revealed to us in the Gospels, and to negative the truth for which "Incarnation" stands.

Numerous citations are unnecessary to prove these contentions. Their validity will be recognized by all who are familiar with miracle apologetic. Let us cite but one defender of the traditional concept of "miracle." "The miraculous" is by this apologist defined as "that which results from what is ordinarily called Divine Interposition, from some special determination of God's Will to an end not secured by those determinations of His will which sustain and direct the ordinary processes of Nature." Miracles, he regards as events where "the Will of God has . . . been specially and directly determined to an end not secured by those perduring determinations of His Will which sustain and direct the ordinary processes of Nature." He then goes on to declare: "The Christology of contemporary idealism can avoid the miraculous only by ignoring the unique personality of our Lord, or by destroying belief in it."[4] By the phrase "the Christology of contemporary idealism" is here meant the modern undogmatic, philosophic endeavours to remain faithful to the truth as it is in Jesus while repudiating the traditional concept of "miracle."

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[4] H. Egerton in *Liberal Theology and the Ground of Faith* (1908), pp. 47, 68, respectively.

Do, then, — and this is the question — such endeavours ignore or destroy belief in the unique personality of our Lord? The assertion that they *do*, is suspect, and like all other assertions demands examination. Upon examination it will be seen to be without valid standing ground, and indeed to be merely an assertion begotten of its own central presupposition — which is, that the concept of the miraculous is necessarily involved by the personality of Jesus Christ.

In reply to this contention that the "unique personality" of Jesus falls with the fall of the traditional "miracle" concept, we maintain a twofold thesis. *First*, that to recognize the unique personality of Jesus Christ does not necessarily involve the traditional "miracle" concept, and *second*, that that unique personality revealed to us in the Gospels renders completely untenable the very concept it is held to buttress and support. Let us deal with these two contentions *seriatim*

Firstly, we regard it as indisputable, whatever be our philosophic views as to the person of Christ, that His was a personality of quite unique goodness, and therefore of quite unique "significance" and "value." The impartial reader of the Gospels cannot escape the conviction that here is a story of a life of irresistible goodness and truth and beauty. Jesus is as truly in these "critical" days as He was in the days of Matthew Arnold "over our heads." He may be regarded, according to the vivid figure of Tyndall, as "a mighty tidal wave"[5] which leaps higher upon the beach than any of the lesser waves of the ocean. Whatever figure, however, we feel able to employ, and such will always be determined by the prevailing or predominant bent of our mind towards His person — whether it be religious, philosophic, scientific, dogmatic, or ecclesiastic — the fact remains that His was a personality greater and better than any the world has yet known.

This conviction, derived from the general impression which the Gospel story makes upon the impartial mind, is, if possible, made more secure by certain of His recorded utterances in which is manifested a self-consciousness of unique insight into reality, and, as inevitably flowing therefrom, unique authority and claim. The self-consciousness revealed in such passages as Matthew, 5:32, 44; 10:33, 37; 11:6, 10; 12:4–6, is singularly impressive in this connection.

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[5] Cf. his paper, *Miracles and Special Providences*.

In addition, there is the fact, which liberal or "modernist" apologetic should have no desire to minimize or overlook, that the influence of Jesus upon His closest associates was such as to lead them both to undertake the stupendous task He had given His brief life to begin, and to endeavour as best they might with the help of His spirit to "theologize" as to His work and His person. It cannot be without significance that His personality so impressed His followers as to lead them to set about constructing a theology such as has, in spite of inevitable transitory "accidents" of time, race, place, and philosophic medium, no parallel for dignity, massiveness, and essential significance in the whole history of man.

It is true that certain extreme critics, by feats of "learned sagacity," have failed to see His transcendent person amid the conglomeration of tendencies which go to His creation. Even so, one standing before some monarch of the forest may be so intent on examining the markings and lines on its trunk as to fail to see its towering proportions. The criticism of certain learned reconstructions of the beginnings of Christianity that they make of Jesus a "psychological monster" seems from this point of view not altogether unjustifiable.[6] Such ignoring of the unique personality of Jesus is not, however, at all latent in the liberal method of approach to the person of our Lord. We may indeed claim that "He stands before the world, as a great Historic Person, with a Personality unfathomed, more clearly than He ever did before."[7]

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[6] Inge, *Outspoken Essays*, 2nd series, p. 52. The reference is to *The Beginnings of Christianity*, by Drs. Kirsopp Lake and Foakes-Jackson. Cf. also Barnes in *The Modern Churchman*, September, 1921, p. 258, who says that the authors of such a book "appear to reach what we may not unfairly term rejective conclusions (*i.e.*, of the centrality and significance of Jesus) by an ingenuity of atomic disintegration which a physicist might envy. Yet with the process ended, Jesus still lives, great and unexplained."

[7] Wilson in *Cambridge Theological Essays*, p. 253.

Whence, then, comes the right of conservatism to declare that the denial of the traditional miracle concept involves the denial of the unique personality of Jesus? This assertion could only be made by those who carry with them to the reading of the life of Jesus as revealed in the Gospels the very miracle concept they are supposed to deduce from it. The Gospel portraiture of Jesus has no real corroboration to give of the anti-scientific concept of miracle which some feel it still necessary to retain. That the personality of Jesus was uniquely good, that He had a unique sense of the reality and nearness of God, that He found unfailing strength in that immediacy of communion which was constantly His — these facts have nothing to say as to a concept which declares for "that which results from what is called Divine interposition, from some special determination of God's Will to an end not served by those determinations of His Will which sustain and direct the ordinary processes of Nature." In the unique personality of Jesus we have *values* which our religious and philosophic consciousness can only call divine; but we have not a determination of the question that here is a *mode* beyond or contrary to "natural" *modes*.

Secondly, it may cogently be maintained that if the supremely good personality of Jesus is to be our "way" to God, then assuredly the traditional "miracle" concept leads us by quite another "way," and to quite another "God." The personality of Christ "leads" to a God who is first, foremost, and always ethical; the traditional miracle concept leads to a God who is arbitrary, if not indeed immoral. The God revealed by Christ has little or nothing in common with the God suggested by the notion that "laws" are violated for the advantagement of some and not of others. It is not necessary to labour again *in extenso* the conclusions of earlier chapters to emphasize this contention.

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This discussion, however, serves to show that inherent in the ascription to Christ's person of the epithet "miraculous" may be the same difficulties as were found in the widely accepted traditional view of "miracle" in general. The problem of the miraculous is, we see, not solved by retreating from a traditional emphasis on "miracles" in order to take a stand by the "miraculous" person of our Lord. The question still is, In what sense can His person be regarded as "miraculous"?

The Virgin Birth. The position which regards a certain *mode* of His coming into the world as essential to the idea of the miraculousness of His person, is a relic, in our judgment, of the inacceptable traditional idea of "miracle." It cannot be too clearly stated that the question of the Virgin Birth of our Lord, while one of considerable scientific significance, is not of such essential religious importance that its rejection would imply the negation of His "supernatural" person. Only those to whom *mode* or *process* is of the essence of the miraculous idea can come to this conclusion.

These latter take up a position in regard to the "miraculous" person of our Lord similar to that taken up by the defenders of the "creation" story, in the days when the theory of evolution was first promulgated. Such a theory seemed to many defenders of the Faith totally subversive of the great truth proclaimed in the early chapters of Genesis — namely, that the universe and all that therein is, owes its being to the creative activity of God. It *so* seemed to them because the notion of creation was regarded as essentially one with a certain mode or process of creation, conceived by them as being taught in scripture. When the *fiat* of the creative word was replaced by an evolutionary process requiring incalculable ages, the great truth for which the term "Creation" stands seemed itself to be lost. Hence the disquietude in some theological circles sixty or seventy years ago. Today, however, it is generally recognized that the essential truth for which "Creation" stands does not involve of necessity any specific concept as to *mode*. The "theory of Design" has required, it is true, a new statement, one more in harmony with a new way of regarding the *method* of creation. But there are few, now, who do not recognize that modern ways of regarding the universe as dependent on the immanent wisdom and activity of God are more helpful and satisfying than the pre-evolutionary views. The point is, that the "supernaturalness" of the universe is not now regarded as bound up with a specific notion of the *mode* in which the "supernatural" is manifested.

The willingness of some theologians to accept the theory of evolution, — an attitude which is tantamount to the relinquishment of *mode* as being essential to the truth of the divine origination and divine guidance of the universe — and their unwillingness to give up a theory of revelation or of the miraculous which demands a *mode* that is incapable by its very nature of scientific formulation, may be regarded as a singular inconsistency still inherent in conservative apologetic. A theology which refuses to accept "evolution" is at least consistent in refusing to give up the theory of "miracles" which involves their scientific inexplicability. But a theology which accepts the first and rejects the second is guilty, as it seems to us, of a basal philosophic inconsistency.

There remains, however, in some apologetic this very signal and persisting manifestation of such inconsistency, — in the attitude, namely, which declares that the "supernaturalness" of our Lord's person is dependent on such a *mode* of His coming into the world as the Virgin Birth theory suggests. In rejecting this inconsistency, we are compelled to reject its manifestation; and therefore must refuse to accept the contention that Christ's "supernatural" person is denied by those who refuse to declare as certainly historical the "Virgin Birth."

The question indeed of the "Virgin Birth" of our Lord is one of especial difficulty to those who seek to arrive at a just conclusion. The evidence of the New Testament for it will not be regarded by even the most conservative critic as conclusively strong. Most critical research will maintain that it is undeniably weak. In any case, where the *pros* and *cons* of the case are so involved, and when so much is of necessity dependent upon subjective considerations, it is not possible with complete security to decide one way or the other. Historical scrutiny of the "evidence" will not in this matter, as in others, bring agreement among those who start with opposed presuppositions. One writer, for example, says that he "is quite convinced, after candid and unprejudiced investigation, that the difficulties of accounting for the Virgin Birth as a fable are greater than the difficulties of accepting it for a fact, making due allowance for the consideration, that the person of whom this witness is given is Jesus."[8] On the other hand, the question has been asked by one whose presuppositions are different from those of the above writer: "Has historical criticism shaken the scriptural basis on which the clause in the so-called Apostles Creed rests?" To him the positive answer to this question, "does not seem to admit of a doubt." Later the same writer says: "the exegetical foundation of the dogma does not bear the test of historical criticism."[9]

Without entering upon an examination of the "evidence" which leads to these opposed conclusions, and without feeling it essential to our main thesis to defend our own historical judgment, it seems sufficient for our purpose to point out the respective opposing presuppositions which in the end decide this issue. These are (1) that an event such as the Virgin Birth presupposes would be "unnatural" and therefore could not have happened, and (2) that it is essential to the "supernaturalness" of His person and therefore *must* have happened.

1. The former presupposition is in these days very widely held, though expressed in different ways. "I am compelled by evidence and by Reason to deny the truth of the miraculous Conception, on account of the very small amount of evidence for it and the very large amount of evidence against it,"[10] was one of the early negative English judgments on this theme. Without any unfairness to this position, it may be suggested that, of the two forces indicated by the author as leading to his conclusion, "reason" is a more important factor than "evidence": and "reason" in this case may be taken for the conviction that such an event is so inherently unlikely that the "evidence" for it could only secure a judgment in favour of it if it were quite

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[8] Professor A. E. Garvie in *Studies in the Inner Life of Jesus*, p. 95.

[9] Professor Lobstein, *The Virgin Birth of Christ*, pp. 57, 110. The evidence is examined in detail in the following books in English devoted specifically to the Virgin Birth, to which the reader may be referred. (*a*) Favourable to the Virgin Birth: Orr, *The Virgin Birth of Christ*, 1907; Sweet, *The Birth and Infancy of Jesus Christ*, 1907; Randolph, *The Virgin Birth of Our Lord*, 1903; Box, *The Virgin Birth of Jesus*, 1916; Briggs, *The Virgin Birth of our Lord*, New York, 1909. (*b*) Unfavourable to the Virgin Birth: Lobstein, *The Virgin Birth of Christ*, 1903; Usener, "Nativity, etc.," in *Ency. Bib.* (*c*) Neutral: V. Taylor, *The Historical Evidence for the Virgin Birth*, 1920.

[10] *The Kernel and the Husk*, Abbott, p. 316.

undeniably strong. "I am convinced," says another, "from observation of what has happened in Prussia, where in 1846 the Church Synod rejected this tenet (*i.e.*, the Virgin Birth) and from what is going on among ourselves, that this particular view is absolutely doomed by the progress of historic research." [11] Should that result be achieved it may be worth while to state that considerations other than those of "historic research" will in the last resort have determined the issue. The late Dr. Sanday indicated frankly that he viewed the Virgin Birth as "unnatural," [12] and without doubt this is the view which finally determines rejection. Professor Bethune-Baker says: "I can only regard this idea of miraculous birth as aetiological and honorific — in those days as natural and reasonable a way of accounting for a great personality and the experience of which Jesus was the cause and centre, as it would be unnatural and irrational today." [13]

In a matter which can obviously hardly be settled to a demonstration, some may think it worth while entering the plea that even so unique or unusual an event as a Virgin Birth presupposes, cannot, in the present limitations of our knowledge of the control of matter by spirit, be held as "unnatural." Such may feel justified in bringing forward biological considerations. "Virgin procreation and resuscitation from apparent death," wrote Huxley, "are ordinary phenomena for the naturalist." [14] Many will feel that it is much too hazardous, others indeed both irrelevant and irreverent, to suggest that phenomena classed by biologists under the term "parthenogenesis" [15] have any bearing on this question. Professor H. R. Mackintosh has said: "It is well to say emphatically that arguments drawn from biology as to the possibility of what is called parthenogenesis are wholly beside the mark. If the virgin-birth is real, its meaning is indissociably bound up with its supernatural character; and this should be avowed frankly."[16] If, however, we may even thus cursorily allude to this theme, it is not to argue that the Virgin Birth of our Lord, if historical, has a necessary connection with such phenomena. It is to set forth the view that even if "biological explanations" were afforded to enable science to regard as possible a narrated event so unique as the Virgin Birth of our Lord, the true "supernaturalness" of His person is not affected. Different minds are differently affected by these "parthenogenetical" suggestions. Some may indulge the lurking hope that, since many things may be possible the mode of which we at present know very little, the Virgin Birth may be a fact belonging to this region of the unexplained, but not unexplainable. The exceeding precariousness of this suggestion, however, must be frankly acknowledged; it does little to mitigate the objections of history and science.

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[11] Percy Gardner, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

[12] *Bishop Gore's Challenge to Criticism*, p. 19.

[13] *The Modern Churchman*, September, 1921, p. 288.

[14] Cf. *The Incarnation of the Son of God*, Gore, p. 247.

[15] Cf. article, "Parthenogenesis," by Professor J. A. Thomson in *Ency. Relig. and Ethics*, Vol. IX. It is historically interesting to note that Origen employed this argument against Celsus. He says: "As a further answer to Greeks who do not believe in the birth of Jesus from a virgin, we have to say that the Creator has shown by the generation of several kinds of animals, that what He has done in the instance of one animal, He could do, if it pleased Him, in that of others, and also of man himself. For it is ascertained that there is a certain female animal which has no intercourse with the male . . . and that this animal without sexual intercourse preserves the succession of the race." (Cf. *Contra Celsum*, Book I, Chap. 37.)

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[16] *The Person of Jesus Christ*, p. 531. On this delicate subject the reader may be referred to an article "*La naissance surnaturelle du Christ et la Biologie*," by Jean Friedel in *Révue de Théologie* (Montauban), September, 1899, where the writer seeks to show the "*rapprochements*" between the facts of parthenogenesis and the Virgin Birth of Christ. Reference may also be made to a paper by Dean Fremantle before the Churchman's Union in 1902 on "Natural Christianity," which occasioned some considerable controversy at the time. It was there maintained that the Virgin Birth might be understood "without any violation of biological law." The following was the interesting, if startling, suggestion offered by Fremantle in support of his contention: "My suggestion would be that the yearnings of a young Hebrew woman, longing with intense and holy desire to be the Mother of the Messiah (which longings were the direct actions of the Holy Spirit), excited and quickened the germ within her and produced in this case what is usually produced by the action of the male." (Cf. *Contemporary Review*, August, 1903, pp. 234–36.) The welcome or otherwise accorded to such a suggestion will be determined by the whole mentality of the reader. Many will feel that it is an altogether absurd suggestion, and is indicative of the straits *they* have come to who seek conservatively to retain the historicity of the Virgin Birth while at the same time repudiating traditional supernaturalism. It is not our purpose here to defend or oppose the historicity of the Virgin Birth. Our main thesis is concerned with a restatement of the *idea* of the supernatural. From that point of view, it cannot be too strongly maintained that the true "supernatural" character of our Lord's birth is not necessarily ruled out by such a "scientific explanation" as was suggested by Fremantle. The words of Mackintosh that "If the Virgin Birth is real, its meaning is indissociably bound up with its supernatural character" are somewhat ambiguous. If the words mean that any endeavours, such as Fremantle's, to "explain" it, necessarily remove its "supernatural" character, we cannot agree. If the scientific inexplicability of the "mode" of the Virgin Birth is of the essence of its "miraculousness," one of two conclusions is left open to us: (1) that the Virgin Birth did not happen, or (2) that scientifically to explain "miracle" is to destroy its supernatural character. In this latter case, the progress of scientific research must, we fear, entirely eliminate all idea of the miraculous and revelation and inspiration. We, however, do not take so despairing a view. On the contrary we regard the essence of the miraculous idea to be retained even after explanation of mode or process be achieved. As "evolution" does not rule out God, so neither does a possible biological or psychological explanation of the Virgin Birth rule out its supernatural character. If, however, Mackintosh means simply that in regard to the *historical problem* presented to us by the question of the Virgin Birth all these biological and psychological suggestions are of no weight, and that the historicity of the Virgin Birth must be determined by not holding in mind such incredible "possibilities" as biology and psychology unfold to us, then again we have left to us the following dilemma. Either (1) the Virgin Birth takes its place alongside the other mythical births that comparative religion reports to us or

2. The latter presupposition — namely that the Virgin Birth of Christ is necessary to the "supernaturalness" or "miraculousness" of His person — has even less to support it than the former. "Once admit," says one writer, "that He was born as other men, and the Incarnation fades away. A child born naturally of human parents can never be God Incarnate." [17] "To separate the Incarnation and the Virgin Birth" is "an impossibility," says the same writer. A more guarded utterance along the same lines, though one not free from ambiguity, is the following: "Historically and logically, the Divinity of Christ and the Incarnation are bound up with the Virgin Birth, and no man can successfully maintain any one of them without maintaining all." [18] The Virgin Birth "involves in a most vital and central way," says another writer, "the entire doctrine of the Incarnation." [19]

Religious philosophy must unhesitatingly refuse to allow these assertions to pass unquestioned. While it is undoubtedly true that "historically" the divinity of Christ, the incarnation,

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(2) it is a "supernatural" intervention, incapable by its very nature of explanation as to mode or process. This latter horn of the dilemma involves a continued necessary and essential antagonism between science and religion. Were a choice demanded in this issue, without doubt the former would be preferable to all who accept the principles of science.

[17] *The Virgin Birth of Our Lord*, B. W. Randolph, pp. ix, 56.

[18] Dr. C. A. Briggs, *The Virgin Birth of Our Lord* (New York, 1909), p. 29.

[19] *The International Standard Bible Ency.*, Vol. V, p. 3057.

and the Virgin Birth have usually gone together, we must refuse to acknowledge that "logically" or of necessity they so involve one another. The "supernaturalness" of our Lord's person is not to be regarded as dependent upon *any specific mode* of His entering the world. If the position should ever arise — an incredible supposition we know — that historical proofs were afforded that His birth was subjected to the same conditions as those of other men, there is no cause to admit that His person has lost its true "supernaturalness." Keim, who maintained the "natural" birth of Christ, maintained at the same time that special divine agency was present at His birth. His theory here reminds us of his "divine telegram" view of the resurrection of Christ. In both cases Keim reveals the endeavour to maintain what we regard as the truly "miraculous," while unable to accept the usually maintained views of both these "miracles." While pointing out in the foregoing paragraphs that the grounds on which this inability to accept the "Virgin Birth" rests may not be wholly objectively stable, we must recognize the abiding value of the service Keim has here wrought. "A human life," he said, "that towers above the ordinary level is never to be looked on as the fruit of mere human birth, but likewise as a deed of God in the world."[20] He sought to retain this "sound kernel" of the truth about Jesus — namely, "the notion of an original, new, transcendent consciousness of God, the greatness and depth of which is as little dependent on any absolute breach of fundamental laws of the universe, as it is on an infinitude in time."[21] "All else which we may regard in any way as a deed of God within the lines of humanity has always, after all, a measured movement of more or less, a mingling of perfection and of deficiency, strength and weakness, of that which excels with that which may be surpassed; sparks thrown by God into the dark earthly formation, drops of the life of God in the broad and troubled river of humanity, no God-like world of light, no god-like sea of life. But here the divine energy, say we rather the divine self-communication, is one that with unbroken might breaks through: it is a whole, full blameless life, no piece-work, no mixture of the lofty and the base; it is a divine creation in

[20] *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 59.

[21] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 64.

full force of largest love; for it is the completion of man as man, the issuing of the creation into the being of the Creator, the blest repose of God in the work of His own hands. It is the realised ideal of God in His Creation, and it is more than a creation; to speak in figures, for of the Highest we can use no other language, a divine formation of His own being's kin and being's like in humanity, a coming of the essential Godhead to men." [22]

Keim's eloquent words and spirit should elicit, we think, a larger sympathy than his work has in many cases inspired. The position that a true "supernaturalness" of our Lord's person can be retained irrespective of the conclusions of history and science as to the mode of His entering the world, is one to be firmly maintained. It is noteworthy that many who in the past like Keim have been unable to believe in the historicity of the Virgin Birth, have yet maintained that His coming-to-be involved of necessity "a deed of God in the world." This is also maintained by Lobstein, who while also unable to accept the Virgin Birth yet holds that the unique grandeur of Jesus involves that He be an especial creation of divine power.[23]

Past and present opposition to such views, it is hardly possible to deny, has been begotten of a fear, and of a scepticism, that it will not be possible to retain the truth that Jesus was "a deed of God in the world," if the traditional "miracle" mode of His entering the world is given up. This fear and this scepticism we are not able to harbour. "A supernatural person cannot be the result of natural processes," wrote the late Dr. Fairbairn.[24] If by that utterance is meant that for the coming-to-be of the unique person of Christ "causes" must be conceived such as were adequate to so unique an "effect" as the personality of Jesus, no one would raise a question. But if it means that natural processes which determine human birth must have been absent in *His* case, it is not possible to agree. Such an *à priori* contention really comes down to this: that an event scientifically "explicable" by natural processes cannot be "supernatural." One of our main endeavours throughout has been to show that the "supernatural" concept can still be applied to events or to persons when so-called "explanations" on natural grounds have been adduced.

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[22] *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 66.

[23] Cf. *op. cit.*, of Lobstein, pp. 100 ff.

[24] *Studies in the Life of Christ*, pp. 331–32.

It is not therefore permissible to force an historical judgment as to the fact or otherwise of the Virgin Birth by the plea that this is necessary to account for the unique person of our Lord. The evidence must be fairly, and as far as possible impartially, adjudged. We have little more right to prejudge this question by our *à prioris* than a modern Roman Catholic has to conclude with an ingenuousness, challenging to every Protestant mind, on an allied question: "The more the Church pondered over the Incarnation, the clearer became the necessity of the Immaculate Conception."[25]

It may, however, be held that it is open to defenders of the Virgin Birth to show its congruence with the uniquely sinless person of Christ. But such a plea, if made, must not be held to mean that the sinlessness of our Lord can be used as a "proof" of the Virgin Birth. It is not allowable to argue that the absence of human fatherhood was essential to the perfectly good life He lived. All it is possible to say on that point is that we do not know. In any case it is necessary to protest against the "Manichaean" notion that there is anything essentially sinful in the union created and sanctified by marriage, a notion which without doubt decides the acceptance of many, especially "Catholic" Christians, of the dogma. To those who hold to the theory of the transmission of original sin through the sin of the parents, it may with a certain validity be argued that if the absence of physical relationship is necessary to account for His sinlessness, then the indisputable fact of Mary's motherhood remains to taint Him with the "entail of sin."[26] We do not, therefore, avoid the difficulty, if indeed it be still conceived as a difficulty, by regarding our Lord as without a human father, since a human mother remains. That, however, is not the question raised here. The position suggested is: granted the sinlessness of our Lord, it may be regarded as harmonizing with the story of the Virgin

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[25] *God and the Supernatural*, p. 51.

[26] It was doubtless this consideration which made necessary and inevitable the Roman Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception. Here, as in many other matters, there is a logical coherence about the Roman position which must command a certain respect, even though it be the respect of fundamental antagonism.

Birth. The utmost that can be said is that here there is a case which is, to quote Professor Mackintosh's words, "one more for the application of the category of τὸ πρέπον than of τὸ ἀναγκαῖον."[27] Further than this, however, it is not allowable to go, and it is not justifiable to regard Christ's sinlessness, as much apologetic still regards it, as of necessity "a miracle having physical relations and aspects";[28] unless, indeed, care is taken to express what an ambiguous utterance such as this really means.

It may further be suggested by the defenders of the Virgin Birth that such an event would be fittingly congruous with the new departure which the person of Christ makes in history. If historical, it certainly could be said to "emphasize" this new departure in the history of mankind. Here again, however, there is no "proof." Nor, indeed, is it incumbent on us to regard the "new" in history as conditioned by a breach in customary sequences. Some, however, may still feel disposed to maintain that the Virgin Birth with fitting consistency signalizes the most important event in the history of humanity to its present point. Others, however, may feel that there is a worthier and finer consistency in regarding the entrance into the world of Him who was "truly and perfectly man," as subject to the same earthly conditions as hold in regard to all others whose supreme exemplar He is.[29]

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[27] H. R. Mackintosh, *op. cit.*, p. 532.

[28] Cf. Bruce, *The Miraculous Element, etc.*, p. 351.

[29] We have not dealt with the question as to whether the story of the Virgin Birth of Christ can with historical justification be regarded as parallel to the legendary birth stories with which the sphere of comparative religions makes us familiar. This question would require a treatise in itself. The reader may be referred to the following for data on which to form his own judgment: *The Legend of Perseus*, 1894, E. S. Hartland; *Primitive Paternity*, 1909–1910, 2 vols., E. S. Hartland; *Les Vierges Mères et les Naissances Miraculeuses*, Saintyves; *The Sacred Shrine*, 1912, Yrjö Hirn, Chap. 15, pp. 218–19; *The Origins of Art*, 1900, Yrjö Hirn; *The Golden Bough*, Frazer, Part IV, 3d ed., Vol. I, pp. 106–07; *Buddhist Birth Stories*, 1880, T. W. Rhys Davids; Article, "Virgin Birth," in *Ency. of Religion and Ethics;* Article, "Nativity," in *Ency. Biblica.* For Birth and Childhood of Zoroaster according to tradition, see the Dinkard (S. B. E., Vols. 47 and 37). (See also *Zoroaster the Prophet of Ancient Iran*, A. V. Williams Jackson, pp. 26 ff.) It may suffice to say that the Virgin Birth of Christ has very little historical parallelism with the many mythical miracle births. Harnack, for example, says: "The conjecture of Usener (see *Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, Vol. I, pp.

In our main discussion we have after some hesitation not allowed ourselves to enter upon that somewhat delicate question, so frequently discussed by "Catholic" theologians of the past, which may be termed the "Virgin*al* Birth." The distinction between the Virgin Birth as usually conceived by Protestants, and the Virgin*al* Birth (*Virginitas in partu*) as conceived by the Roman and Eastern churches, is, we trust, sufficiently clearly expressed by the terms themselves to avoid the necessity of stating in detail the specific significance of each. Suffice it to say that what most Protestants regard as Virgin Birth is more accurately designated by the phrase "Miraculous Conception"; while the Roman Catholic maintenance of the *Virginitas in partu* necessitates, in addition to the "Miraculous Conception," a marvel of the most incredible kind — viz. that the Divine Child left the womb "without the seal of Virginity having been broken." The Roman dogma of the Virgin Birth "teaches that the Blessed Mother of Jesus Christ was a Virgin before, during, and after the conception and birth of her Divine Son." [30] "*Bona porta Maria, quae clausa erat, et non aperiebatur. Transivit per eam Christus, sed non aperuit.*" [31] After the time of S. Ambrosius, who was the first of the Western theologians to set forth clearly this doctrine, both the Roman and the Eastern churches accepted it as of the substance of the Faith. Before, however, it was generally accepted heated doctrinal disputations took place. On the one hand it seemed to the opponents of Docetism that the *Virginitas in partu* would necessarily involve that the body of the Divine Child was an apparition. Hence fathers like Tertullian, Irenaeus, Origen, and Athanasius opposed it. On the other hand later theologians while repudiating Docetism sought by ingenious subtleties to show that such a miracle as the *Virginitas in partu* required, was not more incredible than other physical marvels recorded in the Scriptures. Most modern readers will feel that this repudiation of Docetism was merely verbal and not real.

Happily Protestant theologians have been saved from the discussion of such monstrous incredibilities. They have also shown on the whole little inclination to deal with the *how* of the "Miraculous Conception," accepting it as a fact without troubling about the mode.

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69 ff., H. Usener, Bonn, 1899), that the idea of the birth from a virgin is a heathen myth which was received by the Christians, contradicts the entire earliest development of Christian tradition etc.," — this while holding that "the belief that Jesus was born of a Virgin sprang from Isaiah, 7 : 14" (*History of Dogma* (Eng. tr., 1894), Vol. I, p. 100, footnote).

[30] Cf. *Catholic Ency.*, Vol. 15, p. 448.

[31] S. Ambrosius, *De Institutione Virginis.*

While this attitude, though understandable, is not altogether defensible, at the same time it has to its credit that it has saved Protestants from such ingenious and bizarre doctrines as the medieval *conceptio per aurem*.

The dogma of the *Virginitas in partu* may be regarded as another instance of the facility with which historic facts are manufactured under the impulse of dogmatic prepossessions. The worship of Mary, and the setting her up as a model of Virginity, necessitated the idea that she should have remained in the most absolute sense a Virgin throughout her life. Hence the curious and, to many minds, unseemly mediaeval discussions to show how the Birth of Christ did not contradict this absolute virginity.[32]

Incarnation. Leaving this question of the Virgin Birth and its relation to the "miraculous" person of Christ, it is necessary to say something with regard to the relation of the miraculous idea to the whole notion suggested by the term "Incarnation."

The central truth of Christianity is that God is uniquely revealed in Christ. He is "the effulgence of His glory, the express image of His substance." "The word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John, 1 : 14). "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" are the words attributed to our Lord in one of those sayings found in the fourth Gospel which carry with them much intrinsic evidence of their genuineness.

If this central truth of Christianity stands, it must have considerable bearing on the whole question of the supernatural. Volumes which deal with the subject of the miraculous without referring to those central affirmations — Incarnation and Redemption — do not face all the facts. They may be true to the scientific aspect of the question; they are not true to its religious aspect. The conclusion of a recent French volume, entitled *Le*

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[32] On this subject see Hirn, *The Sacred Shrine*, Chap. 17 and the authorities there cited. See also G. Herzog, *La Sainte Vierge dans l'Histoire* (Paris, 1908); also *The Blessed Virgin in the Fathers of the First Six Centuries*, Livius, 1893 (uncritical); also W. Moeller, *History of the Christian Church* (Eng. ed., Vol. I (4th ed., 1912), p. 508, and Vol. II (2nd ed., 1910), p. 203). For the Roman teaching on the *perpetual virginity* of Mary, see Art. *Marie* in *Dict. de Theol. Catholique* (Vacant) Tom. pp. 2370 ff.

Discernement du Miracle, is that "miracle" can nowhere be "discerned" — neither by history, nor by science, nor by philosophy, nor by theology: "*tous les critères de discernement du miracle qui nous ont été présentés tour à tour par l'histoire et la science, par la philosophie et la théologie sont irrévocables.*"[33] This indeed is true if "miracle" is regarded in the old sense as "an event contrary to nature." The author, however, gives no consideration to those central truths of Christianity — the incarnation and the whole revealing work of Christ — and this omission indicates that the question of "miracle" for him is a purely scientific one. In other words the question of the "supernatural" and the question of the historicity of specific "miracles" are regarded as one question. In the interests of a constructive resetting and restatement of the whole issue, we cannot allow the validity of this attitude. The historicity or otherwise of any "miracles," whether New Testament "miracles" or any others, is essentially a scientific question. We may, therefore, entirely agree with the plea of Dean Inge when he says: "We have, I think, the right to maintain that the question as to the historicity of the miracles in the Gospels and Creeds is a scientific and not a religious question."[34] But the *idea* of "miracle," or the question of the supernatural, is a much deeper question, leading us into realms where science has nothing to say. We, therefore, have the right to maintain that the question of the *miraculous* person of Christ is a religious and philosophic one, not a scientific one.

In a previous chapter it was seen how, granted faith in, and knowledge of, a personal God, what "miracle" stands for will always be believed in. Christianity's supreme assertion always has been and always must be that the personal God has acted, has manifested Himself in a more essential way than before or since, in the person of Christ. The incarnation means this, and nothing less than this, that the living God has acted, has spoken, has revealed Himself, as He really by nature is, in Jesus Christ.

In seeking to arrive at a coherent philosophy of the "Incarnation" we must begin here — Jesus manifests the divine. Then

[33] Saintyves, *Le Discernement, etc.*, p. 350.

[34] *Outspoken Essays*, 2nd series, p. 50.

the question at once is, What kind of divinity does He manifest? What is the essential nature of God revealed in and by Him?

It is of very great importance to note that it is not admissible to ask first of all the question, What is the nature of deity? and having answered that question to our satisfaction, approach the person of Christ and seek to find in Him the "attributes" we have already conceived as essential to deity. Along that line of approach confusion of thought is inevitable. We must not carry with us to our consideration of the incarnation our own preconceived notions as to what an incarnation should be. Frequently this has been done in the endeavour to set forth the "miraculousness" of Christ's person. And the result has usually been unacceptable views of the "miraculousness" of the incarnation.

This spirit is, we fear, the relic of that irreligious or materialistic "lust for a sign" spirit which Christ so severely condemned in the days of His flesh. How will God manifest Himself? asks our sign-loving nature. Surely in some wonderful and "supernatural" manner; surely to reveal His power, His wisdom, His majesty! Surely in some way impossible to misunderstand or to refuse, like a sign written across the face of the heavens, or in some being with faculties of mind and body quite different from our own! Instead he manifests Himself in the most natural, and the most helpless thing in all the world — a baby.

> "They all were looking for a king,
> To slay their foes and lift them high;
> Thou cam'st a little baby thing,
> That made a woman cry."
>
> — George Macdonald

And "day by day like us He grew." He "increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and men" (Luke, 2 : 52). He grew up in the "poor" home of Joseph and Mary at Nazareth, an obscure village with a mean reputation. He toiled with sweating brow at a carpenter's bench. This Son of Man! O blessed name!

He entered upon His brief itinerant ministry that was, in the end, to transform the world. He called to Him twelve quite simple men, many of them from "the common people." "He went about doing good." How natural, yet how truly and in the deepest sense divine! His large heart of sympathy and compassion went out to the people. He healed their infirmities. He solaced their woes. They were to Him "sheep not having a shepherd"; and He was there to shepherd them home. Their minds were confused about the deep and true things of life. So He taught them. From out the inner spring of truth which was His, who lived at the source of truth, came forth the clear waters of healing. "He taught them as one having authority and not as the Scribes" — who taught from their "authorities" so laboriously acquired.

But His activities did not sum up His life. He lived in closest communion with God. "He departed into the mountain to pray" (Mark, 6 : 46, etc.). The hours He spent alone with God were but symbolical of a life lived "at the secret source of every precious thing."

The rulers and priests compassed His death. He was so unlike the Messiah from God they expected and wanted. No God of theirs here! "Give us a sign," was their cry. And Himself in all His divine beauty and love they did not, or could not, see. "If Thou art the Christ tell us plainly," they demanded. And the plain utterance of His life which indeed was "shouting at them" they did not hear. Their preconceived notions of how God ought to visit them, and what He ought to do for them, blinded them to the reality when it lived before them, and deafened them to the divine voice when it spoke to them. And so they crucified Jesus. "He saved others, Himself he cannot save," was their condemnation of such an impotent Incarnation! "Father forgive them," He cried, in that utterance which manifests the potent hidden secret of the real incarnation, "for they know not what they do."

And when later He manifested Himself in His risen glory to the disciples, even *they* could hardly believe. So little had they understood Him! So little were they prepared for a vindication from on high, of the central truths which His life, teaching, and death had been proclaiming to them. "We hoped that it was

He which should redeem Israel" (Luke, 24 : 21). And it was indeed He who had done it, but they knew it not. Had He not suffered the cruel fate of the cross, had He but, by one last appeal to, or utilization of, omnipotence to scatter His foes, set up with sovereign might His kingdom — *then* would they have believed. But these manifestations He did not and could not give them. Nor when He did appear in risen presence to them did He make any of those "supernatural" displays of omnipotence or omniscience which they would doubtless still have wished, and which, if they had been, or could have been, given, might have buttressed up their old "supernatural" views. No "supernatural" vindication of His innocence to compel the surrender of Pilate and the Priests to His claims! No "handwriting on the sky" to prove Him right and them wrong! No "miraculous" portent to prove the love and truth in Him from above, and the sin and error in them from below! He still had but *one* way — to allow the truth and beauty and love that were *in Him* to speak to them, and to the world.

This is God's revelation of Himself to humanity. This is the historic incarnation. Eternity is revealed in time. God has become man.

If men could but divest their minds of notions of the divine gained from other sources than that of the life of our Lord; if they could but confine themselves to the truth about God which He reveals, most of their difficulties in regard to His "miraculous" person would disappear. Since the "miraculous" is a manifestation in history and Nature of God, men's notion of the miraculous is decided by their idea of God. The whole point therefore is, What is the right idea of God? If He is primarily power, then the miraculous will be defined in terms thereof. And so with the other "attributes" of God.

In one of the sublimest "definitions" of God ever arrived at the Westminster Fathers tell us: "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable, in His Being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." A sublime endeavour to define the indefinable! Such endeavours of the understanding to set forth the Nature of God, while justifiable and indeed inevitable, are yet fruitful of misconception and confusion in approaching the person of Christ. For some of these "attributes" are not found in Him, or revealed by Him. He had neither omnipotence nor omniscience nor omnipresence. Deeply embedded, however, in many minds is the idea that He *ought* to have had these attributes. Such an idea cannot of course be made to agree with the record of His life as we have it. Still, the preconceived views of many minds make them, in spite of themselves, look out for such attributes. They therefore approach the appreciation of His divinity along the channel of these ideas. They refuse to look for God in Him. They want rather to look for Him in their notions of God. Their idea of an incarnation so frequently is that of a manifestation in the flesh of the attributes which they conceive to be of the essential Nature of God-head.

Needless to say this is true neither to the historic Christ of the Gospels, nor to the New Testament idea of the incarnation. In our brief sketch of His life and spirit we sought to bring out what the Gospels so clearly and unmistakably reveal — that He was "perfectly man." He had no "supernatural" source of scientific knowledge not open to His contemporaries. Current scientific theories were doubtless His. In such matters as demonology His views were those of His age; and this is recognized today by conservative and liberal alike.[35] It is not possible to conceive Him as having "omnipotence" at His command.

Yet there remains to much apologetic for miracle this striking anomaly — the refusal to find in Christ a "supernatural" source of knowledge, and yet a refusal to give up the idea that He had a "supernatural" source of power. Here again obscurantist theology of the "fundamentalist" type is at least consistent in maintaining both the "supernaturalness" of Christ's knowledge and the "supernaturalness" of His power. The inconsistency of the former apologetic will, however, in the end be clearly seen and be as clearly repudiated. Then it will be seen that there is no resting place or half-way house between Christianity conceived as a religion of interventionistic "Signs," and Christianity as a religion of spirit and of personality.

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[35] Headlam, for example, says (*Miracles of the New Testament*), p. 303: "In this as in all other matters affecting the scientific knowledge of the age, He adopted unreservedly current theories." Some might demur to the verb "adopted" here employed.

Further, the Pauline doctrine of the *Kenosis* (cf. Philippians, 2 : 7, and II Corinthians, 8 : 9) remains to show that the New Testament itself contains or foreshadows a philosophy of the incarnation which leads to the discrediting of conceptions of that mystery which require a manifestation of the divine "attributes." If Christ is conceived as having a source of "supernatural" power beyond what was naturally inherent in Him, can we in any real sense accept a *Kenosis?* Is not that idea itself adequate to the discomfiture of the traditional "evidential" conception of Christ's miraculous person?[36]

The whole question of the divinity of Christ is therefore closely related to the question of the miraculous. Those who approach His person along the channel of God's attributes look for a manifestation of omnipotence and omniscience in Him. Those who cannot acknowledge the presence of such manifestations in Christ have, by these, been very frequently held to deny His divinity. But if the matter were more closely regarded, and more clearly thought out, it would be seen that what such are denying is not the divinity of Christ but the *notion* of divinity which their *traditionalist* opponents have carried with them to the question. In any case, it is our conviction that *they* have the greater regard for the person of our Lord who approach Him, not in order that they may find 'proof' from Him of their preconceived notions of divinity, but in order that they may with simple trust learn in Him what God is like.

It is very significant that the argument of apologetic of the extreme traditionalist type, the argument which refuses the avowal of faith in Christ's divinity to those who do not see in

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[36] The difficulty of believing in a full incarnation while at the same time accepting the traditional view of Christ's miracles may be otherwise expressed, as by Inge: "An Incarnation which needs to be helped out by supernatural intervention is not a complete Incarnation" (*Contentio Veritatis*, p. 88). Fairbairn, who may here be taken as representative of a progressive conservatism in apologetic, acknowledged: "The terms under which Christ lived His life were those of our common non-miraculous humanity" (*Christ in Modern Theology* (2nd ed., 1893), p. 352). Is it not incumbent upon all who stand by such an assertion to apply it to their conception of Gospel "Miracles"?

Him the "supernatural" attributes of their own preconceiving, is *at bottom* the very argument frequently and in all ages adduced by extreme scepticism. All through the centuries scepticism has argued: If Christ was the Son of God, why did He not show it by some dramatic manifestation? As far back as Celsus this has been regarded as a valid contention against divinity. "Why," asked Celsus, in reference to Christ on the Cross, "does he not give some manifestation of his divinity, and free himself from this reproach and take vengeance upon those who insult both him and his Father?"[37] Deeply implicit in that question is the attitude of extreme "orthodoxy": God is to be seen in a display of power. The attitude of materialistic scepticism has been as follows: Because evidences of that power are not found in the life of Jesus His divinity must be rejected. Defenders of traditional apologetic have often said, and still even now occasionally say, to some who are truer to the essential revelation of God in Christ than they themselves are: Because you do not acknowledge that power and knowledge, "supernatural" in our interventionistic and contrary-to-nature sense, belonged to Christ you reject His divinity. Thus do the extremes of scepticism and unenlightened "orthodoxy" so frequently meet.[38]

When the "Jesus of History" is approached in the spirit of open-minded trust, it is found that He did not, in teaching men about God, enter upon the metaphysics of divinity. He said quite simply and definitely out of His own essential knowledge, that God was "Father." Without being a "Father" of children Himself, He, may we not say, by a divine intuition seems to have inwardly realized the true and deep significance of fatherhood.

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[37] Origen, *Contra Celsus*, Vol. II, p. 35.

[38] We might fill these pages with citations to set forth the inner consistency of materialism of the so-called scientific type and that more subtle materialism involved in some so-called religious apologetic. A somewhat amusing illustration may be cited from a debate on the question: "Do Miracles Happen?" held in the Little Theatre, London, on January 19, 1914. Mr. Joseph McCabe replying to Mr. G. K. Chesterton's Romanistic plea for "Miracles" said: "If Mr. Chesterton should rise into the air, I should not go searching for natural causes and agencies that would bring about such a phenomenon; I should fall down and worship Mr. Chesterton at once." Doubtless this was said with a smile; at the same time it is, even so, *revealing*. It manifests the mentality of much traditional apologetic — in that, namely, it construes divinity in terms of abnormality in power. (See *Do Miracles Happen?* 1914 — a report of the above discussion.)

Parents might well have felt that only they themselves could appreciate with the glow of vivid realization the depth of meaning and of truth in the term "Father" as applied to God. But, before they come to this conclusion, they remember that Jesus, who was not a father, Himself by His divine intuitiveness of sympathetic insight not only realized this meaning, but made its truth *central* to His teaching about God. It has been very well said: "Take a concordance of the Old Testament and later Jewish books, and study the catalogue of attributes, most of them turning on His power, His omnipresence, His omniscience, His readiness to punish. Contradictory ideas are jostling one another for the chief place. Fatherhood and love are merely subordinate features among many others. Jesus did not merely reverse the proportion or change the emphasis. He drops all the other phrases; practically He calls God Father and nothing else. . . . And with the new manner of speech does go a new sense of His accessible nearness, His unfailing love, His intimate relation to all men. It is a religious revolution."[39] The first and last truth about God is that He is holy love. Holiness and love are not in any degree antagonistic "attributes." Each in its truest and deepest sense is essential to the other. There is not such a thing as "love" without the hatred of sin and regard for right which the term "holiness" enshrines. Nor is there any such thing as holiness without the deep regard for *persons*, not abstract things, which the term "love" proclaims. A parent who truly loves his wayward child most fully realizes the inseparability of love and holiness. If there be any apparent contradiction therefore between God's holy love and any other views that we have about Him and His mode of working, let us be assured that such views, and not His holy love, are discredited.

The old conception of "miracle" comes under this category. It was based not on Christ's teaching of the nature of the truly divine, but on ideas gained from other sources, which saw the divine chiefly in power. With that idea of the divine in the mind, many theologians of the past constructed a philosophy of miracle as an act of God's power. It had, in consequence, to be something mightier than Nature, hence also the mighty works of the

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[39] *The Modern Churchman*, September, 1921, p. 221 (C. W. Emmet).

Gospel became "evidential" — not because they were beneficent, but because they were powerful. In dissenting from these views we do not, we trust, manifest an attitude of hasty and superficial condemnation of those upon whom *historically* we are so dependent, and to whom in essential spirit and truth we owe so much.

Further, we approach Christ not simply to hear what He had to tell men about God, but, and chiefly, to see God in Him. And the God seen in Him is one who loves and indeed who sacrifices Himself to win man back to the true way. We are here in a region where it is difficult for the religious mind to express itself in calm, measured, and unemotional prose. Charles Wesley expressed himself thus:

"'Tis mystery all! the Immortal dies!
Who can explore His strange design?
In vain the first-born seraph tries
To sound the depths of love divine!
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore,
And angel minds enquire no more."

In this deepest humiliation is the Nature of God most clearly revealed. The Gospel story is so divine, because it is so *perfectly* human. The supernatural is seen in the natural, God in perfect humanity. The sacrifice of Christ is the very sacrifice of God. Says Browning:

"I think this is the authentic sign and seal
Of Godship, that it ever waxes glad,
And more glad, until gladness blossoms, bursts
Into a rage to suffer for mankind,
And recommence at sorrow."

No less a truth than this about God does the incarnation in Jesus Christ our Lord manifest to us. God loves, God sacrifices, God suffers. Let us, therefore, be thankful for the truth expressed by the heresy known as "Patripassianism." Here, as in all other "heresies," we shall ask, not simply, What error do they contain, but, and chiefly, What abiding truth do they enshrine?

The failure to see the divine in the perfect humanity of Christ, a failure which belongs as well to extreme "orthodoxy" as to a sceptical rationalism, is part of the notion of the miraculous in the old false sense of an intervention contrary to Nature. May we not conclude that extremes meet and are both discredited at this point? When the late Mr. Frederic Harrison wrote: "Christianity as a religion rests on the divinity of Christ. If there be no miracle there can be no divinity,"[40] he might have been speaking for an apologetic of the most extremely conservative type. His words contain a profound truth, but not the truth, or rather untruth, he meant. What he had in mind was something like this: If in the life of Christ there is no manifestation of omnipotence or omniscience He cannot be divine. It is indeed strange to see any apologetic for Christianity buttressing itself with similar views — views so at variance with what Christ Himself teaches and reveals.

The truth of the incarnation when deeply apprehended is seen to involve a completely new scale of all values. Material pomp and circumstance and power are in themselves nothing. If some being were ever to visit this world from the distant abysses of space, with powers so stupendous that they transcended our highest imaginative flight, with knowledge so profound that it penetrated to aspects of reality never even conceived of by mankind, we should not conclude that such a being was divine. With the scale of values we have received from Christ, a scale which that which is truest and deepest in our self, with intuitive certitude proclaims to be the right scale, we should look primarily for quite another type of virtues or qualities. And if these were lacking no mere manifestation of power or of knowledge could for one moment suggest that we were in the presence of divinity. In many minds, however, a materialistic scale of values remains deeply embedded, and makes the recognition of God in Jesus extremely difficult. Inge has written for many besides himself when he says: "That the Incarnation should have taken the form of a human life lived under ordinary conditions causes me no difficulty. A perfect human character, with human limitations, is the only possible form of an Incarnation for the benefit of mankind. Nothing would have been added,

[40] *The Positive Evolution of Religion*, p. 202.

and much would have been lost, if the Incarnation had been invested with the trappings of earthly power or with superhuman majesty and beauty of person. Still less, in my opinion, ought we to demand that He should break through the fixed laws of nature, which He Himself ordained, and in accordance with which He orders the course of the world. In so doing, He would not have exalted Himself; He would have condemned His own creation." [41]

This method of approach might also be shown of significance and importance for the theology of the person of Christ. The Nicene discussions can hardly be said wholly to satisfy modern minds. This may be recognized without seeking in any degree to disparage past endeavours to set forth in intellectual formulations a philosophy of His person. Such endeavours will always be made, for God has given to man a mind. Mankind will never therefore dispense with theologies. Those who gird at Christology and maintain that the one and only necessity is, what *all* must acknowledge to be the very valuable rediscovery in our day of the historic Jesus, do not seem to see that a Christology we must have; and that the choice imposed upon us is not between Christology and no Christology, but between one Christology and another. Yet the Chalcedonian doctrine of the "Two Natures" in the one Christ does not greatly help an age which thinks in terms of a quite different philosophy. He was truly and perfectly man. "He was tempted in all points like as we are," the one difference, which indeed makes all the difference, is that He always conquered His temptations, and so was "without sin." Moberly very well said: "He (*i.e.*, Christ) is . . . not so much God *and* man, as God in, and through, and as Man. He is one indivisible personality throughout. In His human life on earth as Incarnate, He is not sometimes, but consistently, always, in every act and every detail, Human. . . . Whatever the reverence of their motive may be, men do harm to consistency and to truth, by keeping open, as it were, a non-human sphere, or aspect, of the Incarnation. This opening we should unreservedly desire to close. . . . We are to study the Divine, in and through the human. By looking for the Divine side by side with the human, instead of discerning the Divine within the human, we miss the significance of them both." [42]

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[41] *Outspoken Essays*, 2nd series, p. 49.

Endeavours such as those of Sanday,[43] to understand the relation of the divine to the human in Christ by the categories of modern psychology, may be regarded as endeavours to meet some of the difficulties inherent in the conception of Christ's miraculous person.[44] Such attempts should therefore beget in our minds an instinctive sympathy. This volume is not a treatise of Christology and we do not now refer to Dr. Sanday's theory from that point of view. We mention it because it is worthy of consideration as having relation to the whole idea of the miraculous which we have sought to elucidate.

Dr. Sanday's tentative theory may be regarded as an attempt to "explain" the "miraculous" person of our Lord. Deeply conscious of the difficulties inherent in all Christological theories based on the complete distinctness of the divine from the human, he sought to evade this dualism by approaching Christology along the lines of psychology. His position may be summed up in two propositions which he thus expressed. "The first is, that the proper seat or *locus* of all divine in-dwelling, or divine action upon the human soul, is the subliminal consciousness. And the other . . . proposition . . . that the same, or the corresponding subliminal consciousness is the proper seat or *locus* of the Deity of the incarnate Christ." [45]

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[42] *Atonement and Personality*, pp. 96–97. Two philosophic judgments, each expressive in differing ways of dissatisfaction with the Chalcedonian declaration of the two natures in one person, may be cited. T. H. Green wrote of this declaration: "This marks the final rupture between Christian dogma and the personal experience in which it originated. . . . Two natures imply a double consciousness, and the facts of a life which is the expression of a double consciousness are no facts at all" (Vol. III, p. 175, of his *Works*, 1888). Eucken says: "Christianity was right when it found the kernel of religion in the union of the natures of the human and the Divine; and even the unfortunate dogmatic representation of the two natures in Christ could not destroy the transforming and elevating energy of this truth" (*The Truth of Religion* (2nd Eng. ed., 1913), p. 206).

[43] Cf. *Christologies Ancient and Modern* and *Personality in Christ and in Ourselves*.

[44] Cf. also a recent article by Sir Oliver Lodge, "The Larger Self," in *Hibbert Journal*, October, 1923, for an endeavour to apply the doctrine of the subliminal self to Christology. Dr. J. H. Skrine in 1907 was "very bold" in seeking to approach the "mystery of Christ" through the facts to which "the inadequate names of Telepathy and Thought Transference" are given. Cf. *Hibbert Journal*, October, 1917, "Telepathy as interpreting Christ."

[45] *Christology and Personality*, p. 159.

Whether Sanday succeeded in evading the dualism which it was his purpose to do, may be very seriously questioned. It might be maintained, for example, that to regard the subconscious as the "seat" of the divine, and the conscious as the "seat" of the human, is to suggest a separation which is neither true to psychology nor helpful to Christology. For, from the point of view of psychology the subconscious and the conscious in personality are all *of one*. Together they form the entity of the personality. That which is now in the subconsciousness may emerge at any time into consciousness; and vice versa that which is now in the consciousness may probably sink sooner or later into the depths of the subconscious. To regard therefore the subconscious as the "locus" of the divine, is to compel the rejoinder, Where is the "locus" of the Divine when that which is in the subconscious emerges into the conscious? Again, from the point of view of Christology it is not unmixedly helpful to suggest that the "locus" of the divine in Christ was that part of the personality wherein dwells, not only the stores of accumulated knowledge, and the springs of such inspirations as "the intuitions of genius, the outbursts of inspired poesy, the emotional fervour or the ecstacy that carries the martyr triumphantly through the severest trials, the enthusiasm that enables the human organism to carry through incredible labours," but also those mysterious "complexes" which lead to physical, mental, moral, and spiritual impotency. "Is a vague and dubious magnitude of this sort calculated to help us to interpret Jesus," asked Mackintosh.[46] Without doubt, this objection is a considerable one.

It must, however, at the same time be remembered that Sanday's theory was only a tentative one. His statement of the theory may be subject to criticism both from the psychological and Christological points of view. But that does not of necessity invalidate the psychological method of approach to Christology. Many of the criticisms[47] passed upon the theory hold only in regard to what may be called its "accidents" and not to its "essence." Among such "accidents" of the theory may be considered two:

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[46] *Op. cit.*, p. 488.

[47] Reference may be made to the following for critical examination of Sanday's theory: (1) *The Expository Times*, August and September, 1910. Two articles by Professor H. R. Mackintosh; (2) various articles in *Hibbert Journal*, October,

1. First, the seeming glorification of the subconscious at the expense of the conscious. Critics at once seized upon this point and referred by way of criticism to the unmoral, if not indeed immoral, character of the subconscious states of which mention has already been made.

This glorification, however, of the subconscious is by no means of the essence of a psychological Christology; just as we should not dream of suggesting that the glorification of the "conscious" was of the essence of more traditional Christological views. Let it be remembered that in conscious states as well as in subconscious states there is a mixture of good and bad. And if critics of the psychological approach to Christology rule out the possibility of divine presence and action within the subconscious, for the reason that evil as well as good potentialities are there, then surely they *ex-hypothesi* rule out the possibility of divine presence within the conscious — and this is a conclusion which would render nugatory the fundamental facts of the religious experience. But no! It is not the subconscious *in itself* which is glorified; it is the possibilities of divine activity within its unfathomed deeps. The bad comes from the subconscious as well as from the conscious; but that does not make either the subconscious or the conscious a state that is inherently bad. Nor does the presence of the good within both the conscious and the subconscious make them both inherently good. We *know* the good when we see it, the bad also. "*Ce n'est pas parce que le subconscient serait en moi, en tant que subconscient, supérieur, que Dieu se sert de lui pour agir sur l'homme. . . . C'est pour des raisons psychologiques que le subconscient paraît devoir être regardé comme le siège de l'action divine.*" [48]

Nor, again, does the psychological approach to Christology of

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1910, January and April, 1911 by Mr. J. M. Thompson, Bishop D'Arcy, Professor P. Gardner, Professor A. Caldecott and Miss E. Underhill; (3) *Oxford Magazine* for November 24, 1910, article by Professor C. C. J. Webb; (4) *Révue de Théologie* (Montauban), July and September, 1911, two articles by Professor Henri Bois, "*La Christologie et le Subconscient.*"

[48] Cf. *Révue de Théologie*, September, 1911, pp. 440–41.

necessity involve that His *consciousness* of God was on the same level as ours. This, it must be acknowledged, has seemed a valid objection against Sanday's tentative statement of the theory. For, it might well be argued, if the "locus" of the divine in Christ was that part of Him which was outside or "beneath" the sphere of His own personal consciousness, what becomes of the claim which the Church has always made on His behalf, a claim which is substantiated by those utterances of His in the Gospels to which we have alluded — that He had a sense of oneness with the Father unique in the history of the race? Does not this theory, it might well be held, by its emphasis on the *subconscious*, belittle His *conscious* sense of God by stressing a subliminal and therefore an unconscious union with God? "The evidence," it was said by a philosophic critic of the theory, "that in Christ manhood was united to Godhead more closely than in other men, must surely be sought in what passed not below but above the threshold of His consciousness; in His consciousness of knowing the Father as none others did." [49]

Again, however, it seems to us that the objection, valid as it is, against Sanday's tentative statement, is not valid against the whole psychological approach to Christology. "The evidence that in Christ manhood was united to Godhead" will certainly be sought in His own consciousness — which, it is well for us to remind ourselves, is entirely "His secret," as Harnack has said.[50] But that fact does not deny to us the right to regard also His "subconsciousness" as being deeper and as having greater inherent potencies than ours. Not in any separate "part," but in the complete indissoluble entity of His personality is the uniqueness of the incarnation in Him to be looked for.

2. Second, the *spatial* notion suggested by the term "locus." It was here that the theory was subjected to much philosophical criticism.[51] To speak of the subconscious as being the seat or "locus" of the divine suggested to the unsympathetic philosophical critic that Dr. Sanday used such terms literally. Whether he did so or no is not now the question. The question

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[49] Professor C. C. J. Webb in *Oxford Magazine*, November 24, 1910.

[50] Cf. *What is Christianity?* p. 132.

[51] Cf. *e.g.*, *Hibbert Journal*, January, 1911, on "Theology and the Subconscious."

is whether this spatial idea is of the essence of a psychological Christology. Assuredly it is not. Spatial terms indeed we must use; there are no other. Sanday himself pointed out the somewhat amusing fact that in a few sentences, taken almost at random from an article of one of his critics on this point, spatial terms were repeatedly employed.[52] What indeed is "space"? That is the question. That space is in us rather than that we are in space is the judgment of idealistic philosophy. But it is not necessary here to concern ourselves with these metaphysical notions. Suffice it to state that to rule out a psychological theory of the mystery of the person of Christ, such as Dr. Sanday's, on account of spatial ideas suggested by the terms employed, seems to us a confusing of accident with essence. When the Apostle Paul said, "Christ *liveth in me*," did the spatial notion suggested by so crudely unphilosophical an assertion (save the mark) rule out of court an experience so intimate, so sublime, so profound? When the same great Apostle said on Mars Hill, "*In Him* we live and move and have our being," is the profound religious and philosophic truth therein expressed rendered null and void by so spatial a phrase as "In Him"? No! The essential truth behind such "accidental" expressions as "locus" and "seat" is the endeavour to understand the "mystery of Christ" by the categories of modern psychology, instead of, as the old idea of miracle as supernatural intrusion necessitated, by such traditional Nicene categories as that of "substance."

All theories of the ineffable mystery of the incarnation are subject to criticism. The fact, therefore, that any theory such as the "psychological" one is exposed to objections, need not deter the mind of man from seeking along such lines to "understand" the unique person of Christ. So long as the assurances of the religious consciousness are conserved — that in Him the divine is uniquely present, and through Him is really speaking and acting — should we not be sympathetic with the endeavours of the scientific faculty in us to "explain" Him. The instinctive objection of many to this method of approach is begotten of the idea that in bringing His personality under any kind of scientific formulation, such as is suggested by the psychological terms

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[52] Cf. *Personality in Christ and in Ourselves.*

"subconsciousness," "subliminal self," and the like, His divinity is being explained away. Some, if not indeed most, of the criticism levelled against Sanday's tentative theory was, we think, inspired by this idea, whether consciously or unconsciously held. A judgment at the time of the controversy, reassuring to those who had many fears, was that of Professor Mackintosh, who held that "Nothing in his theory is at all inconsistent with full adhesion to Christian belief in the divine uniqueness of Jesus." [53]

Nevertheless, the views of unphilosophical "orthodoxy" in this matter die hard. They are of the same "kith and kin" as the idea that scientific inexplicability is central to the idea of the miraculous. Opponents of the psychological approach to the "mystery of Christ" seem to hold that the miraculousness of His person consists fundamentally in the necessary inability to "explain" His personality by categories which may suffice for the "explanation" of ours.

At the risk of the reiteration of one of the main ideas of this treatise, we must deny that this is so. To achieve a satisfactory psychological formulation or "law," — and we do not think that competent psychologists will claim that such as yet has been secured — does not in the ultimate sense explain anything. The laws of psychology are of the same character as the laws of natural science: descriptions of reality, not interpretations of it. If the laws of natural science do not rule out God, so neither do the laws of psychology. The psychologist as much as the scientist understands this.[54] That he does not use the religious and philosophical hypothesis — God — when he constructs his formulations or laws, must not be held to indicate that the psychologist denies the God whose spirit acts and dwells within us. He may say as truly, and as reverently, as Laplace: "I have no need of that hypothesis." An adequate Christology is therefore not necessarily incompatible with the psychological endeavour to "explain" the personality of Jesus. His "miraculous" person abides, even if we were to find a psychological category which "explains" both Him and ourselves.

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[53] See *The Expository Times*, September, 1910, p. 558.

[54] A modern psychologist, Professor R. H. Thouless, for example, speaking of the "humble aim" of Psychology says: "It tells us about the structure of the human nature on which religious modes of behaviour, feeling, and belief are built. Of the reality or unreality of the objects of religious faith it tells, of course, nothing. From the psychological point of view these questions are irrelevant" ("Psychology and Religion," article in *Expository Times*, June, 1924, p. 409). And he recognizes as an "unproved assumption" the idea "that religion would be convicted of falsity if it could be expressed in terms of known psychological laws." (See *An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion*, 1923, especially Chapters 1 and 17.)

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The Divine and the Human. The problem of the incarnation and of the "miraculous" person of Christ leads then to the whole deep philosophical problem of the relation of the divine to the human, of God to man. The two opposed views against which a Christian theism must be on its guard, are first, that of deistic transcendence and separateness, and second, that of pantheistic immanence and identity. Without, however, entering further upon this great field, it may be maintained that the truth of the incarnation presupposes an essential relationship between God and man. If God can reveal Himself in human personality, man must surely be made, as the old writer in Genesis puts it, "in God's image, after His likeness." It is hardly too much to say with Professor Bethune-Baker, that "the primary and fundamental condition (of the Incarnation) is the fact that the Being of God and the being of man are indissolubly inter-related."[55] Professor Pringle-Pattison in similar spirit, speaking of the doctrine of the Incarnation, said: "Whatever else it may mean, it means at least this — that in the conditions of the highest human life we have access, as nowhere else, to the inmost nature of the divine. 'God manifest in the flesh' is a more profound philosophical truth than the loftiest flight of speculation that outsoars all predicates and, for the greater glory of God, declares Him unknowable."[56]

The peril of this position, as has repeatedly been pointed out, is that it may be taken to suggest that God is revealed equally in *all* men. That, however, is not so; though, in our view, care should be taken in expounding such ideas so that no one should be able to maintain that they involve the moral indifferentism of pantheism. On the one hand, it must be recognized that the two statements: (1) That an incarnation is possible, and (2) that there is divine revelation in *only one* being in history — are mutually contradictory. Professor Pringle-Pattison has cogently maintained this. He has held that it is philosophically impossible to maintain a doctrine of the incarnation which denies God's self-revelation in anyone else save the person of Christ. "We are far too apt," he says, "to limit and mechanise the great doctrine of the Incarnation." [57] Later in the same volume he says: "Few things are more disheartening to the philosophical student of religion than the way in which the implications of the doctrine of the Incarnation are evaded in popular theology by dividing the functions of Deity between the Father and the Son, conceived practically as two distinct personalities or centres of consciousness, the Father perpetuating the old monarchical ideal and the Incarnation of the Son being limited to a single historical individual." [58] On the other hand, it must be maintained that the two statements — (1) God is revealed in Christ, and (2) God is revealed in *all* men — are just as mutually contradictory. A doctrine of incarnation which emphasizes chiefly the possibility of divine-manifestation in all men, would rightly make little appeal to the heart and mind of humanity. If it is true that there can be no incarnation in Christ unless God is in a sense incarnate in other men, just as true is it to say that God *cannot* be incarnate in Jesus Christ if He *is* incarnate in all men. For God, however else we think of Him, is the morally best. And only in high moral personality do we see Him revealed. To be asked to see the divine in the immoral or the bad is to be asked to see white in black. It is true, as the late Dr. Hastings Rashdall said, that "the philosophical critics of theology do not . . . recognize how spiritually valueless — nay how ethically pernicious — such a doctrine becomes when God is thought of as incarnating Himself equally in all human beings, the worst as well as the best. If we say 'human nature is divine' and stop there, we enter upon a line of thought which ends in the Hindoo theology or the very similar Absolutist philosophy which recognises no cosmic significance in human morality, and places God 'beyond good and evil.'"[59]

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[55] Professor Bethune-Baker in *The Modern Churchman*, September, 1921, p. 292.

[56] *The Idea of God*, p. 157.

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[57] *Op. cit.*

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 409.

The peril, however, of such a position is in our judgment not essentially involved in the view of the close immanental relationship between God and man which the incarnation in Christ presupposes. God is not revealed in the same way or to an equal degree in all men. The best men reveal God most truly. The one perfect man reveals God fully. Professor Henri Bois put the matter with French incisiveness and clarity when he wrote: "*Dans un homme réalisant parfaitement l'idéal moral de saintété et l'idéal religieux d'union mystique intime avec Dieu . . . se trouve la vraie incarnation de Dieu dans l'humanité, la seule qui ait vraiement une valeur morale, religieuse, spirituelle.*"[60] "If God can only be known as revealed in Humanity, and Christ is the highest representative of Humanity, we can very significantly say, 'Christ is *the* Son of God, very God of very God, of one substance with the Father,' though the phrase undoubtedly belongs to a philosophical dialect which we do not habitually use."[61]

The idea of the miraculous therefore for which we stand is wholly consonant with the central truth of the Christian religion — the full revelation of God in Jesus Christ for this world. Before him we bow, "the effulgence of God's glory, the express image of His substance." Of him we may with inner certitude say: He is the supreme "Miracle," for He incarnates all that is truly divine, and in Him God is uniquely speaking and acting for the "salvation" of man.

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[59] Dr. Hastings Rashdall in *The Modern Churchman*, September, 1921, p. 282.

[60] *Révue de Théologie*, September, 1911, p. 455.

[61] *Philosophy and Religion*, Hastings Rashdall, p. 181.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

It is exceedingly difficult to decide on what principles to construct a bibliography on miracle. If it is to be helpful to the modern student it must not be simply a catalogue of heterogeneous books on the subject. Such a bibliography while comparatively easy to construct would have as its great defect the fact that it would be understandable only by those familiar with the historical controversies which give the books their meaning. Without some considerable degree of familiarity with these controversial movements of thought a bare catalogue of books on "miracles" will be of little real value.

Another considerable difficulty is the fact that *Miracle* embraces almost every question that occupies theological and philosophical thought. It is really *the* fundamental question of modern thought, and lies at the root of such questions as The Idea of God, Inspiration, Revelation, The Person and Work of Christ, The Church, The Sacraments. An adequate bibliography therefore would have to trace the whole course of Christian apologetic to these themes — an obviously impossible task.

In addition to all this there is the question of the historicity of specific so-called "miracles." Here there is unfolded a subject of the vastest range. In the first place, there lies before us all the sacred, and most of the ancient and mediaeval historical, literatures of the world — for all such are full of "miracles." The mere cursory perusal of such, if it were possible, would be the task of a lifetime. In the second place, there then arises the question of the critical investigation of these multitudinous texts, and the whole historical endeavour to sift fact from fiction, real event from mythical or imaginative narrative. Pre-eminently the most important branch of this study is that concerned with the literature composing the New Testament; and of this branch the most important sub-branch is that which deals with the literary and historical criticism of the Gospels. This last section alone comprises a vast literature in many European languages dealing with such questions as text, date, authorship, composition, historical reliability, etc. of the Gospel narratives.

In view of these considerations I have, after much thought, decided to divide this bibliography into four sections, as follows:

I. *Books of Historic Value and Interest.* These are given precedence in consequence either of the controversies they excited, or because they expressed points of view which, having been transmitted to modern minds, have helped to constitute the problem as it today confronts us.

II. *Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Books of Traditional Miracle Apologetic.* The literature here is so vast that with a few exceptions we confine it to books in English. These vary widely in intellectual strength, and some apology might seem to be necessary for putting "strong" books like those of Mozley, Fisher, Christlieb, Bruce, Fairbairn, and Illingworth in the same list with some of the ephemeral anti-Woolston literature or with some of the weak nineteenth century apologetic. How be it, since I am constructing a *reasoned* bibliography, I have had to allow certain seeming anomalies — my apologia being the, to me, very important one that these works of eighteenth and nineteenth century apologetic are *in the main* defensive of the traditional idea of miracle. They may be not unfairly regarded as representative of that interventionist apologetic which so many movements in modern thought are, from different points of view and with differing degrees of cogency, united in challenging.

III. *Books of Comparatively Recent Date Having Bearing More or Less Direct on the Question as It Confronts Us Today.* This list I have found the most difficult to construct. What to include and what not to include has been the perplexing question. At first I felt disposed to confine this section to twentieth century volumes: the objection however to that is that some nineteenth century volumes are much more important and significant for the modern mind than some published within the last twenty years. I was led therefore to decide to include in this section (1) nineteenth century books which I regard as leading or preparing the way for the modern position, and (2) twentieth century books dealing with the subject. These latter vary widely in their scope and dominant motive. Most of them, traditionalist and modernist alike, confuse the question of the historicity of specific "miracles" with the question of the miraculous idea. The former seek conservatively to stand by the historicity of the Gospel "miracles," believing that the surrender of their historicity will negate the truth inherent in the miraculous concept. The latter seek to show the inhistoricity of these "miracles," frequently failing likewise to see that the essential truth latent in the idea of miracle still remains. The former variety, it will be at once noted, is now conspicuous by its rarity. The impressive volume of eighteenth and nineteenth century apologetic of the type it represents has become a mere trickle. The stream of this type of apologetic has practically dried up, and in a few years will be no more. The latter variety is conspicuous in France, and is accounted for, in our judgment, in large measure by the comparative feebleness of Protestant Christianity in that country. Midway between these two types are books expressive of a sense of the insufficiency of either. The great defect of most of these latter is that they make little real endeavour to set forth a coherent and synthetic apologetic — the most important task for Christian thought in the next generation.

On several *specific* questions of considerable bearing on the subject (such as, for example, "miracles" in other religions, phenomena of psychical research, critical investigation of the historicity of the "Virgin Birth" and of "The Resurrection", etc.) I must refer the reader to the books cited either in the text or in the footnotes. I must also ask the reader to remember that this bibliography is not a list of books already referred to in the text.

For the convenience of the British student where an English translation of a continental book exists it has been cited.

IV. *Recent Articles in English and American Periodical Literature.* I have felt it well to append such a list in consequence of the dearth of valuable recent books in English on the miraculous.

I have constructed the first three lists according to the *date* of publication of the volumes — except in the case of works from the same author. The position of an author in the list is determined by the *first* volume of his cited. Except where otherwise noted the date given is that of the first edition. Works of Roman Catholic apologetic are indicated by a bracketed R. C.

I. *Books of Value or Historic Interest*

(Note. The present value and the historical interest by no means coincide.)

Origen (c. 185–254). *Contra Celsum.*
Augustine, A. (354–430). *Works.*
Aquinas, Thos. (c. 1227–74). *Summa Theologica.*
Pascal, B. *Pensées.* (Posthumous. Pascal died in 1662.)
Spinoza, B. *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670).
Leibniz, G. W. *Theodicée* (1710).
Locke, J. *Reasonableness of Christianity.* (Anonymous, 1695.)
  A Discourse of Miracles. (Posthumous, 1716.)
Woolston, T. *Six Discourses on the Miracles* (1727–29). The Two *Defences* appeared in 1729–30.

Butler, J. *The Analogy of Religion Natural and Revealed* (1736).

Middleton, Conyers. *Free Inquiry* (1748). *A Vindication of the Free Inquiry* (1751). (This was cut short by Middleton's death.)

Hume, D. *An Inquiry Concerning the Human Understanding* (especially Chapter 10). First published in 1748 under title *Philosophical Essays, etc.*

Douglas, J. *The Criterion* (1754).

Rousseau, J. J. *Émile* (1762).

Voltaire. *Dictionnaire Philosophique.* (Voltaire died in 1778.)

Herder, J. G. von. *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784–91). (Eng. tr., London, 1800.)

Fichte, J. G. *Critik aller Offenbarung* (1792).

Kant, I. *Die Religion innerhalb Grenzen der blossen Vernunft* (1793). (Eng. tr. by J. W. Semple, *Religion within the Bounds of Pure Reason* (Edin., 1838).)

Paley, W. *View of the Evidences of Christianity* (1794).

Schleiermacher, F. D. E. *Reden über die Religion* (1799). (Eng. tr. by Oman, *On Religion — Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers* (1893).) *Der christliche Glaube* (1821–22). (Second ed. much altered, 1830–31.) (A condensed English form is found in *The Theology of Schleiermacher*, G. Cross (Chicago, 1911). A complete Eng. tr. has recently been issued under the title, *The Christian Faith* (1928).

Paulus, H. E. G. *Kommentar über das N. T.* (1800–04). *Das Leben Jesu* (1828).

Carlyle, T. *Sartor Resartus* (esp. Chapter, "Natural Supernaturalism" (first appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*, 1832–36)).

Strauss, D. F. *Leben Jesu* (1835), Eng. tr., 1846. *Leben Jesu für das deutsche Volk* (1864), Eng. tr., 1865.

Baur, F. C. *The Church History of the First Three Centuries*, Eng. tr., 1878. The *Kirchengeschichte* was published in 5 vols. during the years 1853–63.

Essays and Reviews (1860).

Renan, E. *Vie de Jésus* (1863). (His other works, chiefly *Les Apôtres* (1866) and *Souvenirs d'Enfance et de Jeunesse* (1883), are of interest to the student of miracle, but have not the *historic* importance of the *Vie de Jésus*.)

Lecky, W. E. H. *History of Rationalism* (1865). *History of European Morals* (1869).

Keim, T. *Geschichte Jesu von Nazara* (1867–72; Eng. tr., by Ransome in 6 vols., 1876). (Of abiding value.)

Mill, J. S. *Three Essays on Religion* (1874).

II. *Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Traditional Miracle Apologetic*

Pearce, Z. *The Miracles of Jesus Vindicated* (1729). (Reply to Woolston.)

Entick, J. *The Evidences of Christianity etc.* (1729). (Reply to Woolston.)

Smallbroke, R. *Vindication of the Miracles etc.* (1729). (Reply to Woolston.)

Atkinson, B. A. *Vindication of the Literal Sense of Three Miracles of Christ* (1729). (Reply to Woolston.)

Lardner, N. *Vindication of Three of Our Blessed Saviour's Miracles* (1729). (Reply to Woolston.)

Lowe, S. *The Antidote, etc.* (1729). (Reply to Woolston.)

Sherlock, T. *The Trial of the Witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus* (1729). (Reply to Woolston.)

Campbell, A. *A Discourse Proving That the Apostles Were No Enthusiasts etc.* (1730). (Reply to Woolston.)

Horsley, J. *An Enquiry into the Force of the Objection Made against the Resurrection of Christ* (1730). (Reply to Woolston.)

Stevenson, W. *Conference upon the Miracles of Our Saviour* (1730). (Reply to Woolston.)

Stebbing, H. *A Discourse on our Saviour's Miraculous Power of Healing, etc.* (1730). *A Defence of Scripture History etc.* (Reply to Woolston.)

Sykes, A. A. *Credibility of Miracles etc.* (1742).

Claparède, D. *Considerations upon the Miracles of the Gospel* (Eng. tr., 1757). (A Reply to Rousseau.)

Campbell, G. *A Dissertation on Miracles* (1762). (Reply to Hume.)

Farmer, H. *Dissertation on Miracles* (1771).

Collyer, W. B. *Lectures on Scripture Miracles* (1812).

Penrose, J. *On the Use of Miracles in Proving the Truth of a Revelation* (1824). *Evidence of the Scripture Miracles* (1826).

Le Bas, C. W. *Considerations on Miracles* (1828).

Babbage, C. *Ninth Bridgewater Treatise* (1837). (By a mathematician.)

Trench, R. C. *Notes on the Miracles of Our Lord* (1846).

Caesarius. *Dialogus Miraculorum* (Bonnae et Bruxellis, 1851). [R. C. in Latin.]

Wardlaw, R. *On Miracles* (1852).

Mansel, H. L. *The Limits of Religious Thought* (1858).

Westcott, B. F. *Characteristics of the Gospel Miracles* (1859).

Evans, J. *An Essay on Christian Miracles* (1861).

Aids to Faith (1861), especially Mansel's Essay, "On Miracles as Evidences of Christianity."

McCosh, J. *The Supernatural in Relation to the Natural* (1862). Called forth by *Essays and Reviews.*

Hovey, A. *The Miracles of Christ as Attested by the Evangelists* (Boston, 1864).

Mozley, J. B. *Eight Lectures on Miracles* (1865).

Taylor, W. M. *The Miracles, Helps to Faith not Hindrances* (1865). *The Gospel Miracles in Their Relation to Christ and Christianity* (1880).

Fisher, G. P. *Essays on the Supernatural Origin of Christianity* (1866). (Special reference to Rénan, Strauss, and the Tübingen School.) *The Grounds of Theistic and Christian Belief* (1883).

Duke of Argyle. *Reign of Law* (1866).

Litton, E. A. *Miracles* (1867).

Mountford, W. *Miracles Past and Present* (Boston, 1870).

Newman, J. H. *Two Essays on Scriptural Miracles and on Ecclesiastical* (2nd ed., 1870). [R. C.]

Belcher, T. W. *Our Lord's Miracles of Healing Considered* (1872).

Christlieb, T. *Modern Doubt and Christian Belief* (Eng. ed., 1874).

Steinmeyer, F. L. *The Miracles of Our Lord* (Eng. ed., 1875).

Row, C. A. *Christian Evidences Viewed in Relation to Modern Thought* (1877).

Bois, C. *La Vèrité Chrêtienne et le Doute Moderne* (Paris, 1879). Bois writes on *Les Miracles et les Lois de la Nature.*

Salmon, G. *Non-Miraculous Christianity* (1881).

Gordon, A. J. *The Ministry of Healing or Miracles of Cure* (1882).

Cairns, J. *Christianity and Miracle* (Present-day tracts, 1882, etc.).

Reynolds, J. D. *The Mystery of Miracles: a Scientific and Philosophical Investigation* (3rd ed., 1883).

Arthur, W. *On the Difference between Physical and Moral Law* (1883).

Cox, S. *Miracles, an Argument and a Challenge* (1884).

Temple, F. *Relations between Religion and Science* (1884).

Bruce, A. B. *The Miraculous Element in the Gospels* (1886). *Apologetics* (1891).

de Bonniot, J. *Le Miracle et Ses Contrefaçons* (Paris, 1887). [R. C.]

Thomson, W. D. *Miracles and Modern Science* (1888).

Mead, C. M. *Supernatural Revelation* (New York, 1889).

Lias, J. J. *Are Miracles Credible* (1890).

Laidlaw, J. *The Miracles of Our Lord* (1890).

Latham, H. *Pastor Pastorum* (1891).

Fairbairn, A. M. *Studies in the Life of Christ* (1881). *Christ in Modern Theology* (1893). *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion* (1902).

Illingworth, J. R. *Personality Human and Divine* (1894). *Divine Immanence* (1898). *Reason and Revelation* (1902). *The Gospel Miracles* (1915).

Rainy, Orr and Dods. *The Supernatural in Christianity* (1894). (A reply to Pfleiderer's Gifford Lectures.)

Gondal, I. L. *Le Miracle* (Paris, 1894). [R. C. (very weak)]

Imbert-Gourbeyre, A. *La Stigmatisation, l'Extase Divine et les Miracles de Lourdes* (*Réponse aux Libres-penseurs*) (Paris, 1894). [R. C.]

Loth, A. *Le Miracle en France au 19me. siècle* (Lille, Paris, 1894). [R. C. (very credulous).]

Lyttelton, A. T. *The Place of Miracles in Religion* (1899).

Hurst, J. F. *History of Rationalism* (Revised ed., 1901). (Written from conservative standpoint.)

One of the best ways of tracing the course of Christian apologetic in England during the last century is through the two series: *The Bampton Lectures* beginning in 1780, and *The Hulsean Lectures* beginning in 1820.

III. *Books Having Bearing More or Less Direct on the Question as It Confronts Us Today*

Bushnell, H. *Nature and the Supernatural* (1858).

Powell, Baden. { *The Unity of Worlds* (2nd ed., 1856).
The Order of Nature (1859).

Beard, J. R. *Progress of Religious Thought in the Protestant Church of France* (1861).

Pécaut, F. *Le Christ et la Conscience* (2nd ed., Paris, 1863), especially 26: "Du miracle et de sa valeur apologetique." *Le Christianisme Libéral et le Miracle* (Paris, 1869).

Colani, T. *Jêsus Christ et les Croyances Messianiques de Son Temps* (2nd ed., Strasbourg, 1864). Colani's conclusion was *Necessité pour l'Église chrétienne de retrancher de la vie de Jêsus tout ce qui est inconciliable avec une vie humaine* (*op. cit.*, p. 250 f.).

Coquerel, A., fils. *La Conscience et la Foi* (Paris, 1867). *Libres Études* (Paris, 1868). (See also *Athanase Coquerel fils — Étude Biographique*," E. Stroehlin (Paris, 1886).)

Tyndall, J. *Miracles and Special Providences* (1867). (A reply to Mozley's Bampton Lectures.) *The Belfast Address* (delivered in 1874). *Apology for the Belfast Address* (1874).

Arnold, Matthew. *Literature and Dogma* (1873.) *God and the Bible* — Review of Objections to *Literature and Dogma* (1875).

Cassels, W. *Supernatural Religion* (1874). Published anon.

Stewart, B., and Tait, P. G. *The Unseen Universe* (1875).

Wallace, A. R. *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism* (1875).

Smith, W. R. *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church* (1881). *The Prophets of Israel* (1882).

Seeley, J. R. *Natural Religion* (1882).

Analecta Bollandiana (Quarterly Review begun in 1882 — Bruxelles et Paris).

Smedt, C. de. *Principes de la critique historique* (Liège, 1883).

Brewer, E. C. *A Dictionary of Miracles* (1884).

Fiske, J. *The Idea of God* (1885). *Through Nature to God* (1899).

Collection de Textes . . . pour l'étude de l'histoire (Paris, various dates from 1886 to 1913).

Abbott, E. A. *The Kernel and the Husk* (1886). *Philomythus* (1891). (Reply to Newman.) *The Spirit on the Waters* (1897). *St. Thomas of Canterbury, His Death and Miracles* (1898).

Huxley, T. H. Various Essays: Hume, "The Value of Witness to the Miraculous," "Naturalism and Supernaturalism."

Martineau, J. *The Seat of Authority in Religion* (1890).

Pfleiderer, O. *Development of Theology in Germany since Kant and Its Progress in Great Britain since 1825* (1890). (Of great value.)

Ménégoz, E. *La notion biblique du miracle* (Paris, 1894). There is a German but no English translation of this.

Eucken, R. *The Truth of Religion* (Eng. tr., 1894).

Harnack, A. *What Is Christianity* (Eng. tr., 1894; 3rd and revised ed., 1904). *Christianity and History* (Eng. tr., 1896; 2nd and revised ed., 1900).

Romanes, G. J. *Thoughts on Religion* (1895).

Merz, J. T. *A History of European Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (1896–1914, 4 vols.). (For the general principles and implications of the scientific method and spirit, this is of very great value.) *Religion and Science — a Philosophical Essay* (1915).

Sabatier, A. *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion* (Eng. tr., 1897). *Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit* (Eng. tr., 1904, posthumous).

Langlois, C. V., and Seignobos, C. *Introduction to the Study of History* (Eng. tr., 1898).

Gardner, P. *Exploratio Evangelica* (1899). *A Historic View of the New Testament* (1901), especially Lecture 5 on "The Synoptists and Miracle."

Wallis Budge, E. A. (ed. and trans. by). *The History of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the History of the Likeness of Christ* (1899). *The Life of Takla Hâymânôt, and the Miracles of Takla Hâymânôt, etc.* (ethiopic texts trans., by, 1906). *Legends of Our Lady the Perpetual Virgin etc.* (trans., from ethiopic mss. by, 1922). *One Hundred and Ten Miracles of Our Lady Mary* (trans. by, 1923).

Barth, F. *Die Hauptprobleme des Lebens Jesu* (Gütersloh, 1899).

Fielding, A. *Faith Healing and Christian Science* (1899).

Fleury, M. de. *Medicine and the Mind* (Eng. tr., 1900).

Collections d'Études de Documents sur l'histoire religieuse et littéraire du moyen âge (Paris, Librairie Fischbacher, 1898, et seq.).

Lang, A. *Magic and Religion* (1901). *Making of Religion* (1898).

Sabatier, P. *Opuscules de Critique historique* (edited by, Paris, 1901, etc.); especially Fascicule 12, 13, 14, *L'évolution et le Développement du merveilleux dans les légendes de S. Antoine de Padoue* (Paris, 1906), by Léon de Kerval, and Fascicule, 17, *Conclusion au Tome II qui peut servir de Préface au Tome III* (1914–19), by Paul Sabatier.

Trede, T. *Der Wunderglaube in Heidentum und in der alten Kirche* (Gotha, 1901).

France, Anatole. *The Garden of Epicurus* (Eng. tr., chapter on "Miracle.")

Wright, T. H. *The Finger of God* (1903).

Whiton, J. M. *Miracles and Supernatural Religion* (1903). (Slight.)

Myers, F. W. H. *Human Personality* (1903).

Carpenter, J. E. *The First Three Gospels, Their Origin and Relations* (3rd ed., 1904, especially Chap. IV on "The Miracles").

Beth, K. *Die Wunder Jesu* (Lichterfeld, 1905).

Teil, I. *Das Wunder bei den römischen Historikern* (Augsburg, 1905).

Traub, G. *Die Wunder in Neues Testament* (Tübingen, 1905).

Sortais. *La Providence et le Miracle* (Paris, 1905). [R. C.]

Drummond, J. *The Miraculous in Christianity* (1905).

Cambridge Theological Essays, 1905, especially Essay 8, "The Spiritual and Historical Evidence for Miracles" [J. O. F. Murray].

Sanday, W. *Outlines of the Life of Christ* (1905; 2nd ed., 1922). *Christologies Ancient and Modern* (1910). *Personality in Christ and in Ourselves* (1911). *Studies in the Synoptic Problem* (edited by, 1911). *Bishop Gore's Challenge to Criticism* (1914). *Divine Overruling* (1920). *Position of Liberal Theology* (1920).

Foster, G. B. *The Finality of the Christian Religion* (1906). *Christianity in Its Modern Expression* (1921).

Höffding, H. *The Philosophy of Religion* (Eng. tr., 1906).

Benn, A. W. *The History of English Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century* (1906).

Reitzenstein, R. *Hellenistische Wundererzählungen* (Leipzig, 1906).

Delehaye, H. *The Legends of the Saints* (Eng. tr., 1907). *Les Légendes Grecques des Saints Militaires* (Paris, 1909). *The Work of the Bollandists through Three Centuries* (Eng. tr., 1922). *Les Recueils antiques des miracles des Saints* (Bruxelles, 1925).

Roy, E. le. *Essai sur la notion du miracle* (in *Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne* (Paris, October, November, December, 1906)).

Saintyves, P. *Les Saints Successeurs des Dieux* (Paris, 1907). *Les Vièrges Mères et les Naissances Miraculeuses* (Paris, 1908). *Le Discernement du Miracle* (Paris, 1909). *Les Reliques et les Images Légendaires* (Paris, 1912). *La Force Magique* (Paris, 1914). *Les Origines de la Médicine — Empirisme ou Magie?* (Paris, 1920). *Essais de Folklore Biblique* (Paris, 1922).

Blewett, G. J. *The Study of Nature and the Vision of God* (1907).

Milloué, L. de. *Le Miracle dans les Religions de l'Inde* (in *Conférences faites au Musée Guimet* (Paris, 1907)).

Gerdtell, L. von. *De urchristlichen Wunder vor dem Forum der modernen Weltanschauung* (Stuttgart, 1907).

Dougall, L. *Christus Futurus* (1907).

Bois, J. *Le Miracle Moderne* (Paris, 1907).

McComb, Worcester, and Coriat. *Religion and Medicine* (1908).

Lodge, Sir Oliver. *Man and the Universe* (1908).

Salmon, G. *The Human Element in the Gospels* (1908).

Egerton, H. *Liberal Theology and the Ground of Faith* (1908). (Apologetic for traditional idea of miracle.) *Reasonableness of Miracles* (1909).

Herrmann, W. *Offenbarung und Wunder* (1908).

Rade, M. *Das Religiöse Wunder* (1909).

Boutroux, E. *Science and Religion in Contemporary Philosophy* (Eng. tr., 1909).

Hügel, F. von. *The Mystical Element of Religion* (1909; new edition, 1923). *Essays and Addresses in the Philosophy of Religion* (1st Series) (1921), especially chapter, "Christianity and the Supernatural."

Gordon, G. A. *Religion and Miracle* (1909).

Dearmer, P. *Body and Soul* (1909).

Weinreich, O. *Antike Heilungswunder* (Giessen, 1909).

Hawkins, Sir J. C. *Horae Synopticae* (2nd ed., 1909).

Regnault, F. *La Genèse des Miracles* (Paris, 1910).
Orchard, H. L. *The Attitude of Science towards Miracles* (1910).
Weitbrecht, H. U. *Miracles* (1910).
Schweitzer, A. *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (Eng. tr., 1910).
Thompson, J. M. *Miracles in the New Testament.* (1911).
Holland, H. Scott (and others). *Miracles* (1911). (A slender reply to the above.)
Wendland, J. *Miracles and Christianity* (Eng. tr., 1911). The best recent book in English on the subject.
Mackay, J. H. *Religious Thought in Holland during the Nineteenth Century* (1911).
Skrine, J. H. *Miracle and History — Study in the Virgin Birth and Resurrection* (1912). (Slender.)
Hunzinger, U. W. *Das Wunder* (1912).
Hirn, Yrjö. *The Sacred Shrine* (1912).
Bonney, T. G. *The Present Relations of Science and Religion* (1913).
Platt, F. *Miracles — an Outline of the Christian View* (1913).
Royce, J. *The Problem of Christianity* (1913).
Davies, E. O. *The Miracles of Jesus* (1913). Critical, but excessively conservative.
Bethune-Baker, J. F. *The Miracle of Christianity — a Plea for "the Critical School" in Regard to the Use of the Creeds* (1914).
Strong, T. B. *The Miraculous in Gospels and Creeds* (1914). Traditionalist or Conservative. (Both the above were occasioned by the Sanday-Gore controversy in the Church of England.)
Chesterton, G. K. (and others). *Do Miracles Happen?* (1914). (A debate.)
Weinel, H. *Jesus in the Nineteenth Century and After* (1914).
Headlam, A. C. *The Miracles of the New Testament* (1914). (Critical but conservative.) *The Life and Teaching of Jesus the Christ* (1923).
Joyce, G. H. *The Question of Miracles* (1914). [R. C.]
Cobb, W. F. *Spiritual Healing* (1914).
Hitchcock, F. R. M. *The Present Controversy on the Gospel Miracles* (1915). Conservative.
Grey, E. H. *Visions, pre-Visions and Miracles in Modern Times* (1915).
Frazer, J. G. *Folk-lore in the Old Testament* (1918, 3 vols.).
Cuthbert, Father (ed. by). *God and the Supernatural* (1920). [R. C.]
Lake, Kirsopp, and Jackson, F. J. *The Beginnings of Christianity* (1920), etc.

Pratt, J. B. *The Religious Consciousness* (1920). *Matter and Spirit* (1923).

Moffatt, J. *The Approach to the New Testament.* (1921).

Habershon, A. R. *The Study of the Miracles* (1921). Obscurantist and verbal inspirationist.

Gore, C. *Belief in God* (1921). Apologetic for traditional idea of miracle.

Galloway, G. *Religion and Modern Thought* (1922), especially Chap. 10 on "Religion and the Supernatural."

Hogg, A. G. *Redemption from this World or the Supernatural in Christianity* (1922).

Inge, W. R. *Outspoken Essays* (2nd series, 1922), especially Chap. I, "*Confessio Fidei.*"

Micklem, E. R. *Miracles and the New Psychology* (1922).

Berguer, G. *Some Aspects of the Life of Jesus* (Eng. tr., 1923).

Russell, C. F. *Religion and Natural Law* (1923).

Anson, H. *Spiritual Healing* (1923).

The Miracles of King Henry VI: with introductions by Father R. Knox and S. Leslie (1923).

Richet, C. *Thirty Years of Psychical Research* (Eng. tr., 1923).

Simpson, J. Y. *The Spiritual Interpretation of Nature* (New ed., 1923).

Felder, Hilarin. *Christ and the Critics* (Eng. tr., 1924, 2 Vols.). [R. C. apologetic for traditional idea of miracle.]

Vanderlaan, E. C. *Protestant Modernism in Holland* (1924).

Streeter, B. H. *The Four Gospels, a Study of Origins* (1924).

Leighton, J. A. *Religion and the Mind of Today* (1924).

The Ministry of Healing (1924). Report of Lambeth Conference 1920 Committee.

Major, H. D. A. *Jesus by an Eye-Witness* (1925).

Tennant, F. R. *Miracle and Its Philosophical Presuppositions* (1925).

Fridrichsen, A. *Le Problème du Miracle* (Strasbourg, 1925).

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